This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

10

46.

1267.

10

46.

1267.

MARGARET CAPEL.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1846.

1267.

10

46.

1267.

MARGARET CAPEL.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1846.

1267.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

MARGARET CAPEL.

CHAPTER I.

And he had ever on his lip some word of mockery.

MAISTRE WACE.

Therefore whenever that thou dost behold
A comely corse with beauty fair endewed,
Know this for certain, that the same doth hold
A beauteous soul, with fair conditions thewed;
Fit to receive the seed of vertue strewed,
For all that fair is, is by nature good;
That is a sign to know the gentle blood.

SPENSER.

"Left guardian to her, are you?" said Mr. Casement, looking with an expression of much satisfaction at his friend Mr. Grey.

"I told you so three months ago,"

returned Mr. Grey, in a tone of voice that betrayed his vexation.

"I have been very busy for these three months, and forgot all about it," said Mr. Casement.

"I thought you never were busy, Casement," remarked Mr. Grey.

"One of your mistakes," returned Mr. Casement, as if Mr. Grey's mistakes were a synonyme for the dullest of all possible blunders. "Why, you seem to have the luck of it; you are always being made guardian, or executor, or what not."

"I know I am," said Mr. Grey, looking more and more cold, and vexed, and peevish; and rubbing his knee with great perseverance, as he drew closer to the fire; "but never before to a girl."

"What has become of the two young Trevors?"

"One of them drowned near Ilfracomb the summer before last—the other in India."

"Can't you marry her to one of them?"

"Which?" asked Mr. Grey shortly, "they are both equally within my reach."

"I thought there was another—Alfred Trevor?"

"He is married already."

"And how old is the girl?"

"Seventeen, I told you."

"When did you close accounts with young Haveloc?"

"Last Christmas, didn't you know?"

"I forgot. Sharp work, Master Grey, upon my word. If you are to have a ward every year, I don't envy you. As well open a boarding-school at once. That is the good," continued Mr. Casement, turning round and addressing the fire, "that is the good of being a single man; he is bothered with every body's children. Now, I never was appointed guardian in my life. You had better, my good friend," said he, turning again to Mr. Grey, "you had better cajole Master Haveloc to take the young lady off your hands as quickly as

possible. There is an arrangement which would please all parties."

"I have a great regard for young Haveloc," said Mr. Grey seriously; "and I don't wish him so ill as to force a wife upon him. I never saw any good come of making matches. Margaret Capel is nearer to me than the Trevors, who are only second cousins. She is my own sister's child. She will inherit my property in all likelihood, and then she will find no difficulty in obtaining a husband without the disgrace of going in search of one."

"That's a long speech," remarked Mr. Casement.

Mr. Grey made no reply to this statement.

"That is to say," resumed Mr. Casement, "if you don't leave your money to a hospital."

"I have no intention of leaving a doit to any hospital in the world," said Mr. Grey.

"But Master Haveloc would make her

a nice husband," said Mr. Casement maliciously, "you have heard of the pretty things he has been doing at Florence."

"Yes," replied Mr. Grey shortly.

There was no excuse for repeating the "pretty things," as Mr. Grey professed to recollect them; and Mr. Casement looked a little baffled for a moment.

"Mrs. Maxwell Dorset must be a delightful woman," said he, at length. "It is a pity Haveloc could not manage to run off with her."

"Do you think so?" retorted Mr. Grey, still more shortly.

"He don't do you much credit," resumed his provoking companion, "I am afraid you did not bring him up in the way he should go."

"I did not bring him up at all," replied Mr. Grey. "I had the direction of him, or his affairs, for a couple of years, from nineteen to twenty-one. There began and there ended my control."

"And so," said Mr. Casement, "you expect Miss Peggy here every minute."

"I expect my niece, Margaret, to arrive before nine o'clock."

"Fresh from a boarding-school, good lack!" exclaimed Mr. Casement, "with her head full of sweethearts. You must go over to S——, and call upon the red-coats, only you must get a better cook, let me tell you, or they won't come very often to dine with you. I thought the *fondu* worse than ever to-day. Miss will never want amusement as long as there is a lazy fellow to be found, with a spangled cap on his head, to go about sketching all the gate-posts, far and near, and keep her guitar in tune."

Mr. Grey employed himself busily during this harangue in making up the fire; then suddenly dropped the poker and started. A carriage stopped at the door. Now, he had been cross, not because he was expecting his sister's child; but because he did not know what on earth to do with her when she came.

He hurried out into the hall regardless of the wintry wind, and received the new comer in his arms.

"You are kindly welcome, my dear, to Ashdale," he said, as he led her into the drawing-room. "Casement, this is my niece, Miss Capel."

"Well, I suspected as much," said Mr. Casement, staring into her bonnet; "and now the first question to be determined is —who is she like?"

"I am considered like my mother," said Margaret, in a very quiet sweet voice, laying aside her bonnet as she spoke, almost as if to facilitate Mr. Casement's impertinent scrutiny; but with so self-possessed a manner as to perplex even his degree of assurance.

"Why then your mother was—a very pretty creature, that's all," said Mr. Casement, turning away.

Most persons would have been disposed to echo Mr. Casement's remark, as Margaret brought to view a profusion of bright

hair of a rich deep brown, falling in low bands over cheeks of velvet softness, where the warm colour glowed like gathered rose leaves upon the pure white surface, a small accurate nose, short curved lips, as red and almost as transparent as rubies; and long almond-shaped blue eyes, with a fringe of black lashes curved outwards from the upper and under lid, so as to deepen and almost change the colour of the eye itself.

While Mr. Casement was taking note of these particulars, Mr. Grey placed his niece beside him close to the fire; and rang for tea, with such accompaniments as he thought might be acceptable to her after her long journey.

Margaret, who had been attentively perused by the two gentlemen, now took a survey of them in return, although in a more guarded manner. Mr. Grey was a small, quiet old gentleman, with a thin, pale face, wearing his white hair cut almost close to the head; very mild and pleasing in his address, with a little of the kind and

polished formality of the old school. She thought she never had seen so hideous an old man as Mr. Casement, with his snaky grey and sandy hair, his ragged teeth and long projecting upper lip. As he sat, with the lamp on the other side of his head, the exaggerated shadow traced upon the wall perfectly amazed her when she reflected that it belonged to a human creature. She then looked with some curiosity at the room, which was large though not lofty, with dark oak pannels, and heavy crimson curtains; all the furniture was of carved oak and crimson velvet, which gave a rich but somewhat gloomy appearance to the apartment.

"You are very hungry, ain't you, little woman?" said Mr. Casement, who generally knew exactly what would most annoy those to whom he spoke. A school-girl never likes to be thought very hungry; and as Margaret was not tall, she was extremely sensitive to her small stature. With hands and arms like a Greek nymph,

and a small round neck that would have delighted a sculptor, she envied every girl in the school, however ugly, who measured any thing above her own five feet two inches. She was very shy, with all her apparent self-possession; and she sat deeply colouring, first at the imputation of being hungry, and secondly with a distressing consciousness that she ought, as the only lady present, to offer her services in making the tea, instead of allowing the old butler to prepare it.

The tea being made, and Mr. Grey informed of the fact, the butler withdrew; and then Mr. Casement remarked that the little girl would pour it out, and it would be good practise against she grew to be a woman, and had a house of her own.

Margaret went to the tea-table, and Mr. Casement followed her to explain his peculiar fancies. "That large cup is mine," he said, "give me four lumps of sugar, and put the cream in first; it makes all the difference."

She complied with his directions in silence; but she turned to Mr. Grey and asked if she had made his tea right for him, in that soft low voice which is in itself a courtesy.

"Quite right, my dear," said Mr. Grey, "a great deal better than when Land makes it."

"And so, you left school to-day;" said Mr. Casement, as soon as tea was over.

"Yesterday," replied Margaret, "I went as far as Winchester with a school-fellow, and staid all night there, and came on here to-day."

"Are you sorry you have left school?"

"No, Sir."

"What—did you not like it?"

"Not much, Sir."

"How's that? Were you a naughty girl, eh? Did you not learn your lessons?"

"Yes, Sir, I learned my lessons."

"Why did you not like school, my dear?" asked Mr. Grey, kindly.

"Didn't give her enough to eat, I dare say!" exclaimed Mr. Casement.

"Quite enough, Sir," replied Margaret; "but I felt I was wasting my time there."

"Ay!" cried Mr. Casement, delighted at the reply; "no young sparks there, eh? No inamoratos! A little in the convent style, is it not? Ugly old music master, ditto drawing, and dancing taught by a lady!"

"Don't mind him, my dear, said Mr. Grey, taking Margaret's hand in his, "tell me about it."

Although the indignant blood flashed fast over neck and brow, Margaret made no answer to Mr. Casement, but turned to Mr. Grey.

"I was learning words all day, Sir," she replied, "and music; they gave me no time for thinking. I should be sorry if there was no more to learn than what they teach at school."

"You will have plenty of time here for thinking, little woman," said Mr. Casement, "for hardly a soul ever crosses his threshold; but I am afraid you will have

nobody to think about, if you have not a spark already, I don't know where you are to find one. Such a neighbourhood for young men!"

"There are as many young men hereabouts as there are in other places, I suppose," said Mr. Grey. "What has become of the young Gages?"

"He lives in the Ark," said Mr. Casement, pointing to Mr. Grey. "The Gages are all flown. George is in Ireland, and Everard in Canada, and Hubert I hope from my heart at the bottom of the sea! But they won't do for you, my dear, naughty, swearing troopers. You don't like troopers, do you?"

"I don't know any, Sir," returned Margaret.

"I thought Hubert Gage was a sailor?" said Mr. Grey.

"Right as my glove," said Mr. Casement, "so he is, I forgot. I hate the Gages. George Gage drew a caricature of me; and Everard used to take me off to my face; and Hubert, he used to bolt out of my way

as if I was poison. I have known him jump out of the parlour window as I came in at the door."

Margaret found nothing singular in the conduct of the young Gages, she only wondered what a caricature of Mr. Casement could be like.

"The only one of the family worth any thing is Elizabeth. I mean Elizabeth for my second," said Mr. Casement.

This remark let Margaret into the secret that he had one wife to begin with, a thing she would otherwise have thought impossible.

"Though I don't know, now I have seen you," he said turning to Margaret.

"Casement, be quiet; you shall not teaze my child," said Mr. Grey, drawing Margaret towards him as he marked the angry flush again rise to her brow.

Neither of them were prepared for what followed—she burst into a passion of tears.

Mr. Grey passed his hand over her hair, and pressed her closer to him. Mr. Casement was confused.

"I am really very sorry I have made you cry—I am, indeed," he said.

"You did not, Sir," returned Margaret, becoming calm by a single effort, and wiping the tears from her bright eyes.

"What was it then, my darling?" asked Mr. Grey.

"You said, 'my child,' and it is so very long since—" A choking in her throat prevented her finishing the sentence.

"Well, I'm glad it was not my fault," said Mr. Casement. "Good night, I must be going homeward, or my old woman will scold."

"Does he come here very often, Sir?" asked Margaret, looking up into Mr. Grey's face, as Mr. Casement closed the door after him.

"Yes, he does, my dear," replied the old gentleman; "but you need not mind that. You will get used to his ways, and he does not mean any harm."

CHAPTER II.

Ma chi conosce amor, e sua possanza
Farà la scusa di quel cavaliero
Ch' amor il senno, el' intelletto avanza,
Ne giova al provveder arte, o pensiero ;
Giovanni e vecchi vanno a la sua danza,
La bassa plebe col signor altiero ;
Non ha rimedio amor, se non la morte,
Ciascun prende d' ogni gente, e d' ogni sorte.

BOIARDO.

When Mr. Grey came down to breakfast the next morning, he found Margaret sitting close by the fire reading from a large book. She advanced to greet him, half shy, half smiling, and looked more fresh and softly beautiful from a long and undisturbed night's rest. As soon as Mr. Grey had inquired, with scrupulous care,

how she had slept, and whether she had found everything comfortable in her room, he begged to know what book it was she had been reading. It was Josephus. He laughed a little, and stroked her hair, and told her not to read too much for fear of spoiling her good looks; but he was glad, he said, that she liked reading, because he lived very much alone. He was a great invalid, and unable to pay visits, or receive company. As he spoke he led her to the window, and remarked that there was but a dreary prospect for her at present; but that in summer she would find the grounds very pretty.

Immediately under the windows the men were sweeping the snow from a broad terrace. Beyond that, lay a wide lawn, dotted with clumps of shrubs, and skirted by magnificent cedars, whose boughs lay darkly upon the whitened grass.

Margaret was sure the garden must be beautiful in summer. She wished to know if there were many flower-beds, and where-

abouts the violets grew, and the lilies of the valley.

Mr. Grey was very much amused by her questions, though he hardly knew how to answer them; but as he had some curiosity in his turn, he asked her, as they sat at breakfast, what made her wish to read Josephus, and whether she had not learned Sacred History at school?

"Yes," she said, "but that consisted of Bible stories, which she had rather read from the Bible itself. She had heard of Josephus, and she thought she should find there what she wanted to know of the Jews between the Old and New Testaments."

"And had she not read," Mr. Grey asked, "about the Greeks and Romans?"

"Yes; but she wished to know something of the States which had existed before the foundation of Rome, and particularly the Etruscans. And she had read nothing upon Grecian art or poetry. She felt," she said, "that she knew very little."

Mr. Grey could not forbear a smile as

he thought of Mr. Casement's prophecy about his niece. He imagined that he should not be compelled to call in the aid of the red-coats to amuse her, if her researches fell upon Etruscan relics, or the dythyrambics of the early Greek bards. He puzzled a short time in silence, and then said he had forgotten all those things; but he would introduce her to the Vicar, who was his only visitor except Mr. Casement; and the Vicar was a very good-natured man, and would, he was sure, explain to her every thing she wished to know. He only hoped she would not find herself very dull. There was a piano in the drawing-room, and he had a fine organ in the gallery up stairs.

"An organ!" cried Margaret, her eyes sparkling with delight. "Oh, Sir! may I try to play on it?"

"Yes," Mr. Grey said, "she might if the gallery was warm enough. He would ring and ask Land if it was safe for her."

Land's answer was satisfactory, and he

was directed to wait on Miss Capel in the gallery; and then Mr. Grey said that he was going to be busy all the morning, and that she might walk with Land whenever she pleased; and that Land would be very glad and proud to take care of her.

So Margaret was left, with the beauty of a Juliet, and an old butler for her nurse, to do as she liked with herself from ten in the morning till seven at night. But what a luxury was this compared to the irksome restraint of a school. She was her own mistress. She might learn what she pleased, walk out when she liked, go to sleep if she had a mind—and play the organ!

She was as impatient "as a child before some festival" till she had tried this organ. The grey-haired servant smiled to see her stand chafing her hands with eagerness, her parted lips disclosing her glittering teeth, as he pulled out the stops, and prepared the noble instrument.

"And who ever plays on it here, Land?"

asked Margaret, as she took her place before the keys.

"Nobody but Mr. Warde, our Vicar, Miss Capel," said the butler, "sometimes he comes here and runs over a few psalm tunes."

"Is he an old man?"

"Yes, Miss Capel, older than Mr. Grey."

"Perhaps he will tell me how to use these pedals. Do you know what that note is?"

"No, Ma'am, I do not."

"Well, I will leave alone the pedals, give me Judas Maccabæus, that thin book; and let me have the trumpet stop. Oh, dear, it is all trumpet! What shall I do for a bass?"

"Take the choir-organ, Miss Capel."

"So I will, you do know something about it. What is this thing? A swell? Oh! this is what we should call a pedal. I see I shall make nothing of it by myself. I'll try if I can play Luther's hymn."

"Very well—very well; a little too staccato, young lady. Keep your left hand down."

Margaret sprang from the organ in a panic. Mr. Grey had brought Mr. Warde to see her. But he was such a delightful looking old man, with long white hair falling over his collar, and such a benevolent expression of face, that Margaret felt acquainted with him directly. He gave her a good lesson on the organ to her great delight. Let her into the secret of stops, and pedals and swell, and told her she was the quickest scholar he had ever had; and yet he had taught quick pupils too. "That young man, Mr. Haveloc," he said, turning to Mr. Grey, "who had such a fancy for the organ; it was surprising how he improved in those few months he spent with you. What has become of him lately?"

Mr. Grey said he believed he was on his road to England.

Mr. Warde, who was seated at the organ,

began to play the Kyrie of one of Mozart's Masses. Talking of Mr. Haveloc, he said, had put him in mind of it—it had been one of his favourite movements. He had a taste for the highest order of musical composition, that seemed to be very rare among Englishmen, indeed, Mr. Warde said, he had thought him full of fine qualities.

"A mingled yarn," said Mr. Grey.

"So we are all," said Mr. Warde, "so we are all." He glanced at Margaret as he spoke, and seeing her seated in one of the deep window seats, looking eagerly through a volume of Masses, he took it for granted that she was out of hearing, while she listened in breathless silence to every word of the conversation that followed.

"And now that he has left Florence," said Mr. Warde, "I trust we may conclude that the influence of that designing woman has ceased."

"No doubt," replied Mr. Grey, uneasily. He did not seem as if he liked referring to the subject, and he began to pull out the

stops and put them in again, as if his thoughts were occupied by one engrossing topic.

"How greatly the world fails in its measurement of a character like his," said Mr. Warde.

"True—true," returned Mr. Grey.

"Proud, susceptible, extreme in every thing, and easily deceived from the very integrity of his own nature. I can scarcely picture to myself a character more likely to become the dupe of an unprincipled woman; for while her vanity prompted her to make him her slave, he firmly believed that her heart was devoted to him, and a mistaken sense of justice impelled him to return her supposed regard."

"You know that he did not elope with her," said Mr. Grey.

"So I heard," replied Mr. Warde: "but it was said that the husband intercepted them."

"Her tame husband," remarked Mr. Grey, "there was no duel."

"Thank God for that!" said Mr. Warde, "matters were quite bad enough."

All this passed in a very low voice, but Margaret listened with all her might, and caught nearly the whole of the discourse. The iniquitous conversation of a boarding-school had rendered her no stranger to histories like the present; but she had rather considered them in the light of improper fictions, which it was very naughty in the girls to talk about, than as some of the actual occurrences of life, such as might be discussed by two grave old men like those before her. She looked at the music-book which she held in her hand, and seeing the name of Claude Haveloc on the title-page, she laid it aside, and resolved to play from her own music in future. She was in many respects a remarkable little creature.

It might be reckoned one of the greatest advantages of her earlier life, that she had not been sent to school until the death of her mother, which took place when she

was fourteen years old. Until that time she had been well and delicately brought up. Her father, a Colonel in the Company's service, had sent her to a highly respectable school, intending at the end of three years to return to England, and place her at the head of his house; but not long afterwards, he was killed in an engagement under circumstances that in Europe would have exalted his name to the stars, but which never transpired beyond the confines of the distant province in which it took place; if we except a brief and inaccurate statement in the papers, coupled with a hasty regret that the Company should have lost an efficient servant.

The school he had chosen for his daughter was a religious and remarkably select academy; but there were plenty of spare minutes during the day, when the young ladies could tell each other who had looked at them at church, and who they could not [redacted] smiling at when they took their daily

walk. While the girls were discussing the eyes and waistcoats of the young men they knew by sight, Saint Margaret, as she was called, would steal away to her books, and endeavour by study to drive from her head the trifling conversations that went on around her.

Still, histories like the one hinted at, possessed to her imagination a fearful interest. She regarded Love as a mysterious agency which swept into its vortex all those who suffered themselves to approach its enchanted confines. She imagined that the first steps to this delusion might be avoided; but that once entranced, the helpless victim followed the steps of the blind leader through danger, or neglect, or guilt, without the will or the power to shake off its deadly influence. She had much to learn and to unlearn.

"But what was that affair in Calabria? Not another entanglement, I hope," said Mr. Warde, content in seeing Margaret still at the window arranging her books.

"Oh! that was a harmless affair enough," said Mr. Grey; "if you mean that encounter with the brigands?"

"I heard something of brigands," said Mr. Warde, "and something about a lady and her daughter."

"Aye—aye! the lady and daughter had taken shelter in a hut, having received intelligence that there were brigands on the road. It was a lonely spot, and you may suppose that Haveloc and his servant, chancing to come up at the time, were pressed into their service. The brigands were as good as their word, and did come; but found the hut so well lined that they marched off again. Still, in the scramble, Haveloc was hurt by a shot from one of their carbines, which I dare say rendered him very interesting in the eyes of the ladies. I think he mentioned in one of his letters to me, that he fell in again with them at Sorrento; but I imagine that they were nothing more than a passing acquaintance. That was before his stay at Florence."

"Oh, yes! a very satisfactory version of the business," said Mr. Warde; "but I must now be going. I have a sick person to visit. Good bye, Miss Capel. I expect you to be wonderfully improved by the time I come again."

Margaret rose, bade the old gentleman good bye, and offered him her best thanks for his kind instructions.

As soon as she was left alone, she began to think over all she had heard. She felt as if she had been transplanted into the regions of romance — so strange was it to think that Mr. Grey actually knew somebody who had defended two ladies against an attack of brigands, and been wounded in the contest. This somebody, it was true, was very wicked; but still so very brave, that she could not but admit she should like to see him of all things. She thought he must resemble one of Byron's heroes, and she detected herself wondering whether he had blue eyes or brown.

She was interrupted in her reverie by Land, who begged to know whether she would like to walk; and advised her to wrap up very warm, for it was a bitter frost.

Her heart beat with delight as she hurried on her furs, and ran down the great staircase to meet her old escort. She felt free as air, she could walk exactly which way she liked, with only a servant behind her, instead of being linked arm-in-arm during the whole promenade with some young lady, who was uninteresting if not disagreeable as a companion. It was as Land had predicted, a bitter frost; her breath whitened her veil, and the ground felt like granite under her feet. Every thing around had been transformed, as Ariel says, "into something rich and strange." The trees stood like coral groves; every branch thickly crusted with sparkling crystals; every brook was ice-bound; every roof pendant with icicles. The sharp air seemed filled with a visible bright-

ness. The pale blue sky appeared to have receded into a farther distance, and the silent fields and hill-side deserted by the grazing flocks, presented an unbroken extent of dazzling snow. Margaret bounded forward with an elasticity of spirit that seemed as if it could never tire. She could not sympathise with old Land when he begged her to walk a little slower; but she wrapped her furs more closely round her, and complied. She had a thousand questions to ask as they proceeded. She must know who lived in every house they passed, and the direction of every road and narrow lane that crossed the highway.

Mr. Land passed over the village dwellings very slightly; but when they came in view of a large white house standing on the river-side with broad lawns and clustering elms, he pointed it out to her with an air of great dignity.

"That seat, Chirke Weston, belongs to Captain Gage. Quite the gentleman, Miss Capel."

The father of the young Gages who

disliked Mr. Casement. Margaret looked with much interest at the white walls of the house.

"They are expecting home, Mr. Hubert," said Land, "such a fine young gentleman. A sailor like his father—they are a fine family. Miss Gage is the handsomest young lady in the county."

Margaret felt interested in the Gage family, she begged Land to point out to her where they sat at church, that she might know them by sight. They came to some fields which took them another way to Ashdale.

"Is this field, my uncle Grey's?" asked Margaret, "what a large pond! I say, Land, when I was a little girl I could skait very well. Could you get me a pair of skaits? I will give you the money."

Land looked very grave; but Margaret coaxed and begged so much, that he said he would see about it; and the next morning a small pair of skaits was laid beside her shoes outside her bed-room door.

The frost continued: she hurried over

her organ practice; and went down to the pond with Land. Her skates were on in a moment; and had there been any spectators, they might have enjoyed the sight of an old man holding a young lady's muff and boa, while she amused herself by skimming over the ice. She was never weary. Poor old Land walked up and down the side of the pond with his hands in her muff, wishing every minute that she would bring her sport to a conclusion, until he was forced to tell her that his time was up, for he had to go in and see to the cleaning of the plate. The next day she managed to go out earlier, for the frost was still hard, and she determined to make the most of it while it lasted.

She excited the unqualified approbation of Land by her performance, for, as she bade him observe, she was fairly getting into practice.

She flew round the pond, and across, and back, until he was almost tired of watching her.

"Miss Capel—Miss Capel! quick! her comes Mr. Casement," cried Land, bu Margaret was careering round the pond an did not hear him.

"Miss Capel! Bless the child, he wil go and say all sorts of things to Mr. Grey Oh, dear me! Miss Margaret—"

"Well, Land, what is the matter? Yo look in such a bustle. You don't mean t say the ice is giving way?"

"Mr. Casement is coming across th field, that's all, Miss Capel."

"Oh! I don't care for him—horrid ol man! Just look how nicely I can turn thi corner."

Mr. Casement passed through the fiel on his way to the house, and Margare continued her skating with great eagerness

Presently a footman was seen runnin towards the pond followed by the gar dener's boy at a little distance; the appeared the fat coachman, and, in th farthest distance, Mr. Grey himself.

The footman, quite out of breath, brough

his master's compliments, and he begged Miss Capel to come off the ice: then up came the boy, grinning, but saying nothing, then the coachman toiled up, and said that master was in a mortal fright lest the young lady had come to any harm; and informed Mr. Land, aside, "as how that cankered old toad, Casement, had been telling master a pack of lies about a thaw;" and by the time Margaret had disengaged the straps of her skaits from her little feet, Mr. Grey had reached her all in a tremble, and taking her in his arms had begun a gentle remonstrance on her imprudence in venturing upon thin ice. Land came forward, and vowed that the ice was as firm as the rock of Gibraltar, and recommended, in proof thereof, that the fat coachman and the gardener's boy should cross the pond arm-in-arm. But Mr. Grey's fears once excited, could not so easily be set at rest; if the ice was not thin, it would probably be slippery—not an uncommon attribute—people had broken their limbs

before now by a fall on the ice ; indeed, he was not sure that there was not a case of the kind at present in the village, which he hoped would be a warning to Margaret never to skate again. And seeing that she was half crying as she resigned her skates to Land, he promised her a plum-cake for tea as the only means that came into his head of softening the bitterness of her disappointment.

CHAPTER III.

The red rose medled with the white yfere,
In either cheek depeinten lively chear;
Her modest eye,
Her majesty,
Where have you seen the like but there?

SPENSER.

Mr. Grey did not go to church on the Sunday after Margaret's arrival. He very seldom ventured during the winter to encounter the cold and damp common to most village churches at that season; from which some persons augured that he had a bad heart, while others contented themselves by supposing that he had a delicate chest.

Having seen his little niece warmly packed up in the carriage, he returned to

his library to read the service to himself, and she proceeded, with some little elevation of feeling, on her way. It was new to her to have a carriage all to herself, to recline alone in the corner with her feet in a carriage-mat; and to have Land to hand her out, and carry her prayer-books to the pew-door. Having deposited Margaret and her books, and having whispered to her that the Gage's seat was next to hers, Land withdrew to his own part of the church.

Presently, a tall, elderly man of imposing appearance, with an empty sleeve, and hair touched with grey, opened the door of the Gage's seat, and stepped back that the young lady by his side might pass in. These, Margaret was sure, were Captain Gage and his daughter. Captain Gage cast one quick glance from his clear blue eyes at Margaret, and then took his seat. Miss Gage lingered a second longer, without any apparent rudeness of manner, from a genuine reluctance to remove her eyes from so lovely a face. Although Miss

Gage was all fur and black velvet, yet her regal figure and magnificent stature could not be mistaken.

She was strikingly like her father, with straight features, light brown hair, and calm, clear, full-opened blue eyes; but although it was impossible to deny to her face the regularity of an antique statue, and the sweetness of expression that almost always accompanies regularity, she possessed one drawback in the eyes of Margaret; she must have been two or three and twenty, at least, an age that to a girl of seventeen seems to approach very near to the confines of the grave.

Margaret possessed too correct a sense of her religious duties to spend her time in watching her neighbours, but as they sat just in front of her, she could not raise her eyes without seeing them; and before church was over, she had become perfectly acquainted with Miss Gage's appearance, from the large ruby that flashed on her white hand, to the purple prayer-book

inlaid with silver in which she looked out all the places for her father.

Mr. Grey was very much amused by her account of what she had seen when she came home. He was very careful that she should have plenty of sandwiches, and hot wine and water for luncheon to counteract the cold of the church, and sat listening and smiling to hear her describe Miss Gage's velvet pelisse and little ermine muff. He saw plainly, he told her, that she would like a black velvet gown herself. Margaret coloured and laughed, but could not deny the fact, and the next morning after breakfast, he told Land to go over to the next town and get one.

"Ready made, Sir?" asked Land, endeavouring to impress upon his mind the exact height of his young lady.

"No, no, Land; black velvet enough to make a gown for a lady. That is the way, is it not, my darling?"

Margaret was profuse in her thanks, and was beginning to imagine what a grand

appearance she should make in it; when Mr. Grey told her, after looking at her attentively with a smile, that it would make her look like a little old woman. Her unfortunate height was one great obstacle to her enjoyment.

Once when she was out walking with Land, she met the Gages. Captain Gage was pacing leisurely up and down before a cottage, sometimes looking sharply up into the sky as if watching the weather; and just before Margaret came up, Miss Gage joined her father from the inside of the cottage, and said, "I have kept you waiting unmercifully, to-day, my dear father, but she was so very ill."

"Ill, was she, poor old soul!" said Captain Gage, "take care that she has all she wants. Give me your basket, Bessy."

But Bessy would not give her father her basket, and they walked out of hearing.

Margaret grew to be interested in the Gages; she liked to hear all Land had to tell her in their daily walks about them;

and as Captain Gage divided with Mr. Grey the honour of being the greatest person in that neighbourhood, he paid the usual penalty of greatness, and could not stir abroad, or stay at home without having his doings registered. Land knew to an hour when the ship in which Mr. Hubert was second Lieutenant arrived at Plymouth, and when Captain Gage set out to meet his son, and accompany him home. He was likewise well informed as to whether Miss Gage drove out in the chariot or the britschka, and how many people were staying at Chirke Weston.

This sort of gossip was certainly not the best thing for Margaret, and it was contrary to her habits to seek for such amusement; but she felt a kind of interest in the family, particularly in Miss Gage, that she could hardly explain to herself.

With regard to her own occupations, she played the organ, she read history, particularly the books that Mr. Warde either recommended or lent; as she could not

skait, she walked with Land every morning, and after luncheon Mr. Grey's carriage was at her service if she chose to drive out. She was quite a little Queen in the house; she had only to express a wish, and it was fulfilled. She had a very skilful maid entirely for herself, her dressing-room was fitted up in a style of elegance that might have served a duchess; in short, her uncle did not quite know, as Mr. Casement told him, how to spoil her enough. It may be supposed that she became exceedingly attached to him, in the evening she sang to him, or sat on a low stool by his side, telling him all the little pieces of news she might have heard during the day, or relating with equal interest the historic tales that she was reading, or exciting his sympathy, by a detail of the uncomfortable period she had passed at school.

It happened one morning that Margaret walked down to the Vicarage with Land to exchange a volume of history she

had borrowed, and when she was shown into Mr. Warde's morning room, she found him talking earnestly with Miss Gage.

"I beg your pardon," said Margaret, drawing back, "I did not know you were busy."

"Oh! come in, come in, little one," said Mr. Warde, "we were talking no secrets. Ah! you want the second volume. Why, what a reader you are!"

"And will you not come nearer the fire, while our good friend is finding your book?" said Miss Gage to Margaret.

"Thank you," returned Margaret, drawing towards the fire, and ungloving her beautiful hands.

"Do you like this cold weather?" asked Miss Gage, kindly.

"Yes, when it is a hard frost," returned Margaret; "but I am looking forward very much to summer time."

"You will find the neighbourhood beau-

tiful in spring," said Miss Gage, "and I think Mr. Grey has the prettiest place in the county."

"I am glad of that," said Margaret, "I have not half explored it yet."

"I dare say you have plenty of amusements in-doors," said Miss Gage, "I am sure you have an unfailing one if you are fond of reading."

"Yes, reading and music," said Margaret, "and the house is kept so warm, that I can play wherever I like on wet days."

"And what do you play at?" asked Miss Gage.

"Battledore," said Margaret, blushing as she made the confession; "but it is rather stupid with only one player."

"You will give this note to Mr. Grey, little one," said Mr. Warde, returning to Margaret with her book, "and make good haste home, or you are likely to be caught in the rain. And now, Miss Elizabeth, I have done your bidding."

"Thank you very much for your kindness," said Miss Gage, as she shook hands with him. Then turning to Margaret with a sweet smile and a bow, she said, "I hope it may happen that we shall be better acquainted with each other."

Margaret endeavoured to say a few words expressive of her pleasure in the idea; and then hurried off to Land with her book and note.

Now Miss Gage had begged Mr. Warde to write to Mr. Grey, that she might know whether it would be agreeable to him that she should make the acquaintance of his niece. He was recognised as such a determined invalid by all the country round, that she never thought of calling upon Margaret, taking it for granted that such a step would be an intrusion upon Mr. Grey's habits. But she wished much to show her every attention in her power, from a sincere desire to make her happier than she was likely to be if always shut up with a nervous old man for her only

companion ; and from a hope that her society might be of some advantage to a girl so much younger than herself; for Margaret was right, Miss Gage was turned of two-and-twenty.

For acts of disinterested kindness are not quite so frequent as good people imagine, nor yet so uncommon as selfish people, who never perform them, would fain make out. The pitiful phrase of nothing for nothing being unceasingly used by those sorry persons, who give nothing, it is true; but who invariably take all they can pillage, or beg from every human being they approach.

Mr. Grey accepted Miss Gage's kind advances with much gratitude, and she immediately wrote to ask Margaret to dine with her the next day, that they might lose no time in becoming acquainted with each other. Margaret was equally pleased ; to be sure, the idea of going to a strange house all alone was rather formidable, but there was a sweetness in Miss Gage's

manner that gave her some confidence. However, the day was not to be one of unmixed satisfaction, for Mr. Casement came to dinner; and she was obliged to take his arm into the dining-room instead of her uncle's, and as they were crossing the hall, he asked her if she did not wish he was a nice young man; which question had the desired effect of making her blush, though she longed to tell him that it would be a great gain if he could be changed into any thing that was nice, young or old. Then he began to teaze her about her skaiting, which she bore in silence till Mr. Grey interfered, and begged him to talk of something else, which request he complied with immediately by changing his point of attack, and laughing at her dress, which was in the fashion of the day, and consequently quite different from any thing that his "old woman" wore.

This strain of banter, Mr. Grey interrupted by mentioning Miss Gage's kind invitation.

"Oho!" said Mr. Casement," then there are some hopes for you, little woman."

The very manner in which he uttered the interjection, oho! with a little jerk at the end, was unpleasing to Margaret: she sat with her beautiful lips compressed, resolved to be silent.

"It is particularly kind in Miss Gage," said Mr. Grey, "knowing the state of my health to be so bad."

"There is nothing the matter with your health, I am sure," said Mr. Casement, "you will live to be a hundred!"

Mr. Grey smiled quietly, and made no reply.

"It is all nerves—what are nerves? Don't tell me!" said Mr. Casement.

Mr. Grey did not seem at all inclined to tell him; and Margaret, rising pettishly from the table, pushed her chair back, and her dessert plate forward, and turned about to leave the room.

"Going, little woman?" said Mr. Case-

ment, "going to sit in state in the drawing-room, and play at being grown up?"

"Going away from you, Sir;" returned Margaret, taking courage from being almost outside the door.

Mr. Grey laughed; although he tolerated Mr. Casement's caustic remarks from very long habit, he was not at all sorry that any other person should be less forbearing.

Meantime Margaret had much to think about as she sat over her embroidery; she was considering first, how she should be dressed on the morrow, and next, how she should behave. Her one anxiety was always to conceal her shyness, which she did beneath a repose of manner that deceived almost every one.

When the gentlemen joined her at tea-time, Mr. Grey was in excellent spirits. The evening post had brought him a letter from Mr. Haveloc, announcing his arrival in England, and saying he would be at Ashdale in a day or two. He was very

much attached to his former ward, and the idea of seeing him so soon gave him great satisfaction; he could not avoid expressing this feeling several times, unawed by Mr. Casement's satirical glances, which were alternately directed to Mr. Grey and to Margaret. She heard the news with anything but pleasure. It would materially alter her comfort and freedom to have any one staying in the house; and she forgot Mr. Haveloc's picturesque encounter with the brigands while musing on the annoyances she was likely to experience during his visit to Ashdale.

CHAPTER IV.

She is a child in years,
And though in wit a woman, yet her heart
Untempered by the discipline of pain
Is fancy led.

TAYLOR.

MARGARET felt terribly shy as the c
riage stopped at the Gage's door. Not
the beautiful basket-work of her elabor
plaits of hair; not even the long cove
black velvet which set off to so m
advantage her snowy neck and shoulde
not the pearly delicacy of her white
silver gloves could reconcile her to
distress of entering the drawing-room alo
She was tremblingly alive to everythi
to the stately appearance of the hall w
its marble columns, and the beauti

exotic creepers trained round them; the powerful scent of the choice hot-house plants; the pompous manner of the servants, who took her cloak from her; and when the drawing-room door was thrown open, she did not see distinctly anything within, so overpowering was her shyness. But Miss Gage met her almost on the threshold, took both her hands in hers, and welcomed her so kindly and yet so calmly, that she felt quite happy.

Captain Gage came forward, shook hands frankly with Margaret, and asked after Mr. Grey's health; and then Miss Gage turned round and presented her brother to Margaret. She saw then for the first time that he had been standing on the hearth-rug beside his father. Indeed, it would not have been particularly easy to have long overlooked him. All the Gages were on a large scale, and Hubert Gage was as like his father and sister as it was possible to be, except that his blue eyes had more of mischief than Elizabeth's,

and it may be said, rather less intelligence. Like her, he had light brown hair of that silken texture which is stirred with every breath of wind, straight features, and a fine upright carriage which joined to his unusual height would have given an air of great dignity to his deportment, but that his manner partook of that restless enjoyment, and that careless frankness which is still not uncommon among men of his fine profession. Directly Margaret was named to him, he shook hands with her as if he took it for granted she was somebody he ought to recollect very well, and sat down beside her.

"I am very sorry to hear that Mr. Grey has become such an invalid," he said, "when I was last at home he did not shut himself up in this way."

"I did not know my uncle till lately," said Margaret, "but I understood he was always in delicate health."

"So he was," remarked Miss Gage, "but as Hubert had the full range of his or-

chards, and preserves, and sometimes met his kind old friend walking on the terrace, he never had an idea that there could be anything the matter with him."

"A pretty couple you were to be turned loose upon an invalid," said Captain Gage, "you and Claude Haveloc."

"I am sure we always behaved admirably," said Hubert, "all the old women in the parish used to hold us up as a pattern to every mischievous urchin who plagued them. Did they not, Bessy?

"I never heard it before," said Elizabeth, laughing.

"I allow we got into a scrape with the poachers," said Hubert; "poor Mr. Grey was really frightened then."

"You came home on a pair of shutters. Did not you?" asked Captain Gage.

"Not so bad as that," replied Hubert; "but Haveloc had his arm broken. You know Bessy, how I used to teaze him about it. I always declared that one of the poachers struck at him with a broomstick."

"And did they?" asked Margaret, with wide opened eyes.

"No. It was the stock of a gun, I believe," said Hubert Gage, looking at her with much complacency: "but if you had ever seen Claude Haveloc you could imagine how little he would enjoy such an undignified catastrophe."

"And poor Mr. Grey gave up game-keepers ever after," said Elizabeth, "and entirely neglected his fine preserves. He was so shocked at the danger two silly boys had brought upon themselves."

"And Claude got a shot in the shoulder in that adventure with the bandits," said Hubert; "some people have the luck of it."

"Your father to wit," said Captain Gage.

Margaret noticed the proud admiring glance that Hubert Gage threw on his father as he spoke; but at that moment dinner was announced. Captain Gage came up to her and offered his arm; Hubert Gage whispered something in her ear about his

father cutting him out, which did not lessen the tints on her cheek, and then fell back and led his sister from the room.

At dinner, Margaret sat with perfect tranquillity listening to the conversation, and replying quietly to everything said to her. Hubert was exactly opposite to her, and though she seldom lifted her eyes to him, she felt that he was looking at her much more constantly than he ought. She was a rapid observer of character, a faculty common to shy people; for the very sensitiveness which occasions that feeling, quickens their perception of the qualities of others. She detected that Hubert Gage, with a great deal of candour and good-nature, had but little enthusiasm—his father had tenfold more ardour in his composition, even at his age. He was anxious that no one should be able to discover that he was a sailor by his language or appearance; took the greatest pains that his dress should not betray the secret; never used a technical term; affected not to know which way the wind

was; and prided himself with some reason upon his horsemanship; and this not because he had the least dislike to his profession, but from an idea that it was vulgar to display any traces of it.

Elizabeth was talking to Margaret about some book she was reading, when she caught something her brother was saying to her father, and paused to listen.

"What did you say, Hubert, about Sir Philip?" she asked.

"That he is to undertake this survey," he replied; "he has scarcely returned before he will go out again. Before I landed, he was on his road to London for his instructions, and he will be off I dare say in a few days. Just the thing for him, Bessy."

"Very unwise in his state of health," said Captain Gage.

"Oh, Sir! pray let him kill himself his own way," said Hubert, laughing; "he enjoys it amazingly."

"I wonder at you, Hubert," said Miss Gage, "such an honour as you ought to feel it to have sailed under such a Captain."

"It is an honour I am very willing to resign," said her brother, laughing still more, "we were always on the best of terms, but I don't much like him."

Elizabeth regarded her brother in speechless amazement. Had he said he did not like King William IV., she would hardly have thought the remark more treasonable. Sir Philip d'Eyncourt, whose ship was a model ship, whose scientific knowledge was quoted as infallible; who had been her father's favourite officer; who had seen real service; who had been shipwrecked in a romantic manner, on a romantic island; who was going out to make a survey, when he ought to have come home for his health; who pursued his profession after he had succeeded to a baronetcy, and a large estate; who knew how to manage his crew, a very different thing from commanding them. However, as she was struck quite dumb, she was unable to inquire of her brother whether he was in the enjoyment of his right senses.

"Oh, look at Bessy!" exclaimed Hubert, "I forgot that Sir Philip was her hero."

"Never mind, Bessy," said her father; "I like Sir Philip, let that content you."

Miss Gage smiled her approval of this sentiment; and nothing further occurred until she left the table with Margaret.

"I must do the honours of my own sitting-room to you," said Miss Gage, as she ushered Margaret into a room plainly furnished; but adorned with abundant book-shelves, and a few pictures and busts. There was a round table of green marble between the windows, on which stood a small bust of Lord Nelson in white composition under a glass. Two masterly water colour sketches of Captain Gage, and of Hubert, her favourite brother, hung over the mantel-piece. She showed these to Margaret with a calm pride in her eye and voice, that pretty plainly discovered the estimation in which she held them. If she had a weakness, it was her ardent admiration of the navy. If she could have

been brought to confession, I believe she would have owned that she thought it a contemptible waste of time in any man to adopt another profession, if he could by any means go on board a ship. She adored her father, not only with the affection which so delightfully attaches parent and child; but with a boundless admiration, a devoted pride, that made her seriously consider him unequalled in character both private and professional. She told Margaret of the engagement in which her father had lost his arm:—a desperate encounter with a French ship shortly before the close of the war.

"They tell me," she said, "that his arm might have been saved, if he would have consented to leave the deck in time; but he knew his presence was needful, and he remained until the Frenchman struck. My father—there was always an accent on the word—would fight his ship as long as he had a stick standing, and then blow it up,

rather than strike his colours. I am glad he lost his arm!"

Margaret shuddered, and looked with wonder at Elizabeth, who stood with her bright eye kindled as if she were quite equal to perform the actions she applauded. Yet there was nothing masculine or ungraceful in her emotion. The phrases she used were those she had alone heard employed from her childhood to describe certain transactions, and she would have found it difficult to allude to them in other terms.

"But I must show you my other brothers," said Miss Gage, "or you will call me an unnatural sister."

She opened two miniature cases which lay on the table.

These were the "troopers" Mr. Casement had mentioned. George Gage stared arrogantly out of the ivory over an immense pair of very light moustaches, and Everard stood looking so exceedingly languid, that

he threatened to drop into the back ground altogether. Miss Gage clasped them up, rather carelessly, as Margaret thought, and then held a taper to the bust of Nelson. "That is my hero, of course," she said, "that, and the gallant King Christiern IV.; here is a small oil painting of his Danish Majesty. Have you read Carlyle on 'Hero Worship?'"

"No," Margaret said, "she feared she had read very little. It was so difficult to find books, or time to pursue any study at school but those assigned to you."

"I do believe," said Miss Gage, "that you are wise enough to begin your education just where everybody ought to begin it; as soon as other people have done teaching you."

"I have need to begin it," said Margaret looking round on the book-shelves. "How much you know! Here are books in—how many languages?"

"Oh!" said Miss Gage smiling, "I should never measure a person's knowledge

by the languages, or the accomplishments they happen to have learned."

Margaret looked inquiringly at her, but had not courage to ask for an explanation of so strange a remark. She knew that at school a girl who learned German was thought more highly of than one who only learned French, and one who played the guitar took precedence of the young lady who only paid for lessons on the piano.

"I mean," said Miss Gage, "that the education which is of most value to us through life, is that which teaches us to think and act with judgment and integrity, which is quite independent of the knowledge of Spanish and German, or of any accomplishment, however pleasing."

This was a new idea to Margaret, but before she could make any observation upon it, a servant came to let them know that coffee was ready, and they went immediately to the drawing-room.

After tea, Hubert Gage asked his sister or some music.

"Will you have the harp?" said Miss Gage ringing the bell, "I will just give my father his book, and then play what you like. My harp, Davis."

"Why don't you keep it down here?" asked her brother.

"Ah! you know nothing of female politics," said Miss Gage, smiling; "the young ladies like me a great deal better for keeping my harp, and some other things in the background."

"But the young gentlemen don't;" said Hubert, as he stood leaning on the harp.

"I am very sorry," said Miss Gage laughing, "I cannot arrange it to please all parties; but in society where every one is anxious to play a prominent part, I feel it to be a real kindness not to take up their time by my performances."

"Don't you think Bessy spoils me?" asked Captain Gage of Margaret, as his daughter found the place in his book, and arranged the wax lights beside his chair.

She had not courage to make any other reply than a blush and a laugh.

"After all, Bessy, I am half tired of this book," said Captain Gage, "I shall never have patience to get through it. Have you seen it?" he asked, holding out the volume to Margaret. It was the 'Tour to the Sepulchres of Etruria.'

She could hardly read it aright in her impatience. Here was undoubtedly all she wanted to know—she would be able to find out at last who the Etruscans were.

Elizabeth smiled, and told her when her father had made up his mind not to finish it, which she foresaw would be very soon, she would send it to her. "But," she said, "you must not expect too much; this is an account of a lady's visit to some tombs. There is but little information regarding the people, except what may be inferred from the degree of excellence they displayed in the decoration of their sepulchres."

"But you know, Bessy," said her brother, "that a people's progress in art is the

best standard you can have of their degree of civilization."

"Yes; if you had looked upon them as a barbarous race," said Miss Gage to Margaret, "you will find sufficient proof in this book that you had not done them justice."

"Why, Bessy," said Hubert, "no Phœnician colony ever was, or could be, in a state of barbarism."

"Assuming that they were Phœnicians," said Elizabeth.

"There can be no doubt of that," returned her brother, "their character is sufficient evidence of their origin. The old Greek character, written from right to left, after the fashion of the Phœnicians."

Elizabeth unlocked a cabinet, and took out a gold serpent-ring—she showed it to Margaret as an undoubted Etruscan relic, which her brother had brought her from Rome. Margaret looked at it with great reverence—it was thick and heavy, and the gold was of a dull colour—not like the

bright trinkets in a jeweller's shop; but it was delightful to hold in her hand something that was two thousand years old.

Miss Gage went on to talk of the circlets of gold leaves found in some of the tombs; of the city of Cœre, and the origin of the Vestal Virgins; and the degree of religious knowledge enjoyed by the Etruscans; and Hubert took pencil and paper, and sketched for Margaret one of the allegorical processions painted on the wall in the tombs; taking care to exaggerate, as much as possible, the evil spirits which figure in those decorations.

Margaret listened earnestly—she was afraid to lose a word—it was not to her a dry narrative of facts, but a dim unfolding of the pages of a gorgeous and mystical romance. A people so magnificent, and of whom no written literature remains, appeared to her so contradictory and so tantalising, that she longed to seize the book at once, and never rest until she had read it through. She hoped Miss Gage would

say something more on the subject, but just then Elizabeth saw Captain Gage trying to open one of the illustrations in his book, and she went to his chair to help him. Margaret noticed that Miss Gage was always on the watch, and whenever her father was at a loss, from having only one hand, she supplied the deficiency; and that so quickly and quietly that few people would have been aware of it.

"Now for your harp, Bessy," said her brother, "we had forgotten all about it."

"Because we have been better employed;" said Miss Gage, placing herself at the harp; "music is always a *pis aller;* when people cannot talk, they very naturally have recourse to a noise."

Margaret could not echo this remark: she loved music from her heart, and she sat absorbed in the sweet sounds, quite unconscious this time that Hubert Gage's eyes were fixed upon her face. Elizabeth played splendidly—better than any young lady at her school, and without a book.

She sat watching her fine marble hand and arm as she stilled the harp-strings, and began to fancy that she should like to play the harp instead of the organ.

Hubert Gage pressed her very much to play in her turn, but she declined with a feeling of panic that almost made her giddy; and Elizabeth, at her request, sung her a ballad. It was the first time she had ever heard a song *spoken*, if the phrase may be applied to vocal music, and it moved her almost to tears. Hubert asked her if Bessy did not sing very well, and Margaret, lifting up her dewy eyes, said, "beautifully!" and looked so beautiful when she said it, that he leaned across to his sister, and declared that there was not upon the face of the earth such an exquisite little creature as her friend.

Miss Gage rose from the harp, and they sat round the fire for a chat, but there was no time for any more conversation, for Margaret's carriage was announced.

Captain Gage told her that she must

soon come to see Bessy again. Elizabeth took an affectionate leave of her, and Hubert led her into the hall and wrapped her cloak all round her, much as one would muffle up a little child, talking and laughing all the time, and stopping to gather her flowers from the creepers in the hall in the intervals of handing her gloves, and winding her boa round her neck. He then went to the door, and assuring her that it was a hard frost, he offered her a cloak of his own, which she had some difficulty in preventing him from putting on, and which he absolutely insisted on throwing to the bottom of the carriage to keep her feet warm.

Margaret drove off a little taller than she was before. She wondered what the girls at school would have said if they had heard a young man declare he thought her an exquisite creature. She believed nobody thought her so at school. Girls had often told her that young men had quite looked at them, and squeezed their hands at a

Christmas dance, but she wondered whether they ever threw their cloaks at their feet, almost like Sir Walter Raleigh and Queen Elizabeth. She had learned some few things that evening. She had spent several hours with a young lady who had not acquired a proficiency in an accomplishment for the sake of exhibiting to her acquaintance, but in order to make her home cheerful. Miss Gage had never asked her for a list of the things she had learned, a list so important to school girls who graduate, by its length, their good opinion of every girl they met.

Margaret had always a thirst for knowledge, and she felt more desirous than ever to cultivate her intellect, now that she found how agreeable it was to converse, or to listen to persons who talked well. She was ashamed to think that she did not know who King Christiern was; she had been hurried, when at school, through a compressed History of England, but there had been no hurry in the way she had journeyed through Chaulieu's and Czerney's

Exercises. Once impressed with the importance of acquiring information, she determined that nothing should divert her from a steady course of application.

In the midst of these reflections the carriage stopped, and she hastened to the drawing-room to give Mr. Grey an account of her visit before she went to bed. To her great vexation, she found him seated in earnest discourse with a stranger. The candles had burned low, one of the lamps had gone out, and the room was only half lighted. Margaret paused at the door, but Mr. Grey called her in.

"Come here, my child," said he, "I am afraid it is a very cold night. I hope you have taken no chill. Claude, my niece. Well, did you pass a pleasant evening?"

Mr. Haveloc, on being named to Margaret, rose and bowed slightly, placed her a chair, and returned to his own. She felt all her shyness return: coloured, bowed without raising her eyes, and went up to Mr. Grey.

"Well, and how are they all?" said Mr. Grey.

Margaret, standing with her back to Mr. Haveloc, and her hand in Mr. Grey's, felt her courage somewhat restored. "I dare say they are all very well, Sir," she said in a low voice: "but oh! I wish you had heard Miss Gage sing, Sir, and play on the harp; and she has such a nice sitting-room of her own, Sir, and so many books! She is going to lend me one about Etruria. Elizabeth wore such a beautiful nosegay, Sir, of azalias—sweet smelling ones. May Richard get me some azalias?"

"Yes, my love, that he shall—to-morrow," said Mr. Grey. "And what did you talk about?"

"Oh! most about Etruria. I wish Miss Gage had told me some more curious things. I think she knows more about it than Mr. Warde. He told me if he met with some things in Livy, he would mark them and read them to me; I wish he would. Look, Sir, I cannot think how this stain came on

my glove. Oh! I recollect: I was gathering myrtle in the green-house just before I went."

"What a little bit of a hand it is," said Mr. Grey, "are you sleepy, my child?"

"A little, Sir. Mr. Warde said he would teach me Latin, if I wished to learn it, but I think I had better leave it alone till I know more of other things."

"Oh, my child! don't learn Latin whatever you do," said Mr. Grey, "it really will—quite wrinkle her, won't it, Claude?"

Mr. Haveloc gave a short laugh, and Margaret recollected that he was in the room, and grew uncomfortable again.

"Elizabeth never plays in company, do you know," said she, after a short pause, "is not that odd? Oh dear, Sir, what a dreadful thing it is to have only one arm!"

"Why, my child, Elizabeth Gage has —oh true! she is thinking of the father—yes, very awkward indeed!"

"Well, I shall wish you good night,

uncle, I am quite tired," said Margaret, and stooping her head a very little as she passed Mr. Haveloc, who held open the door for her, she went up-stairs without having the slightest idea of his personal appearance, for she had never once raised her eyes to his face. She merely thought, as her maid brushed out her luxuriant hair, that Mr. Hubert Gage had taken a great deal more notice of her, and was a much more agreeable person.

CHAPTER V.

Oh! how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.

SHAKESPEARE.

The next morning when Margaret came down to breakfast, she enjoyed in perfection all the feelings which shyness produces in very young people.

She hoped that Mr. Haveloc would not be in the library, and that he would not speak to her if he was there; and she tried to recollect what people always tell very shy girls, that she was not of sufficient importance to be taken notice of. This, by the way, is not exactly the means best adapted to the end in view; a sense of insignificance

is a very material cause of shyness, and to strengthen this idea is one way to confirm a person in shyness for the rest of their lives.

Her colour mounted as she opened the door, and she was not a little relieved to find the library vacant.

While she was employed in making the breakfast, she saw Mr. Haveloc pass the window apparently in deep thought. He was accompanied by a couple of beautiful dogs, a spaniel and a setter. But he paid no attention to their movements, except by sometimes passing his hand over their silken heads in return for their caresses.

A recollection of his adventures induced Margaret to regard him with some attention, now that she was able to do so unseen. He would not have been generally considered handsome. His forehead was remarkably massive, and his eyes a dark hazel, capable of every variety of expression: he was, to say the truth, very much sun-burned; and he wore his black hair, not long, indeed,

but turned inwards like a scroll, after the fashion of some of our early Kings. There was an expression of discontent and disdain on his face which Margaret thought very disagreeable; but at any rate he was just as much discontented with himself as he was with other people, and no doubt with equally good reason.

Mr. Grey came down, and received Margaret with his usual affection, and seeing Mr. Haveloc walking at a little distance, he called to him, and bade him come in, saying to Margaret as he returned from the window, "That young man now, is the only one who reminds me of what they used to be in my young days. They are quite altered now, my dear; they are much more selfish and calculating; they don't neglect their own interests so much, but they neglect other people's feelings a great deal more. There was some vice certainly; they drank hard, my dear, but they told the truth, and that is a great blessing. I think when I was young, a man would be

ashamed to tell a falsehood. It could not be done, my dear; they do it now every day."

Margaret said, "Yes, Sir," to every clause in this speech, and wondered to herself whether all the young men used to look so gloomy and distracted as Mr. Haveloc looked when he entered the room. He bowed to her, and she thought he said "good morning." She returned the salutation, but not the words; and then he turned to Mr. Grey and offered to banish his dogs, which had followed him into the room.

"By no means," Mr. Grey said, "he liked animals about him, unless Margaret was afraid of them."

"Oh, Sir! I am afraid of nothing," said Margaret, smiling at Mr. Grey under shelter of the urn.

Whether the sentiment, or the delightful voice in which it was uttered struck Mr. Haveloc, is uncertain; but he moved his chair with the intention of gaining a better view of the fair speaker. The urn was, how-

ever, unfavourable to him, and she afforded him little more opportunity of hearing the sound of her voice during breakfast. As soon as breakfast was over, Mr. Haveloc asked Mr. Grey how soon it would be possible for him to call on Mr. Warde. He had yet to learn, he said, how these things were managed in England.

Mr. Grey was certain that Mr. Warde would be glad to see him at any time, such an old friend as he was.

Mr. Haveloc asked if Mrs. Somerton and her daughters were staying at the vicarage?

"No," Mr. Grey said; "they had been on a visit to one of their relations for some months."

Margaret thought she heard Mr. Haveloc mutter a thanksgiving as he turned away. He walked to the window and began caressing his dogs.

"And what are you going to do, my darling?" asked Mr. Grey.

"A great many things, Sir. First, I shall practise as soon as ever Land—oh! come here, Land; when can you spare time to come with me to the organ? Not before twelve—very well. I shall read till Land is ready for me, and then—oh! dear Sir, there is Miss Gage on her beautiful grey horse. Oh, Sir! it is not a very hard frost, it is very nearly spring. Will you soon buy me a pony? That is to say a horse, dear uncle; I should look so little on a pony. There is nothing in the world I wish for so much, and it is so long to wait until spring."

"But which is it?" said her uncle stroking down her soft thick tresses of hair, "is it a very long, or a very short time till spring?"

Margaret paused a little—she wished to make it appear short; but early in February it would not do. "The truth is uncle," said she blushing with the effort, "it is a long time."

"Right, my child, the truth!" said Mr.

Grey; "you shall have a horse as soon as I can meet with one; only we will not ride him until the weather is a little warmer."

Margaret was almost speechless with delight, and had fairly forgotten the presence of Mr. Haveloc, who stood regarding her with a smile of such softened expression, that she would scarcely have recognised him.

Miss Gage was riding with her brother, and when they arrived before the house, they pulled up their horses. Hubert Gage dismounted, ran up the hall steps, rang the bell, pushed open the door, and came into the library without any farther ceremony.

Mr. Grey welcomed him very warmly. He was very fond of young people, and felt sincere pleasure in seeing him again. Mr. Haveloc came forwards with more animation than Margaret had seen him express, shook hands heartily with Hubert, and remarked that he was very glad their return to England should chance at the same time.

"Why did not you tell me he was here?" said Hubert turning to Margaret, "when we were talking over old stories last night?"

"I did not know it," replied Margaret.

"Well, Bessy will not dismount, it is such a trouble to mount her again," he said; "so she desires me to ask if you will drive out with her after luncheon?"

"I shall like it very much—it is very kind of her," said Margaret. "I may, Sir?"

"With all my heart, my child," said Mr. Grey.

"Ay, I should first have asked your uncle, should not I?" said Hubert laughing. "Have you been out to-day?"

"No—not yet."

"Oh! bless me, of course it is too early," said he, taking out a diminutive watch, which looked more striking on him than on a person of ordinary dimensions. "I wonder you are up at this hour."

"You are keeping Miss Gage in the cold all this time," said Margaret.

"So I am, but I cannot get away," he returned, looking archly at her.

She wished she could help colouring, but the beautiful crimson stole over her cheeks at the implied compliment.

"Don't you think us half mad to ride in such weather?" asked Hubert. "The truth is, I wished to see Bessy in her habit again."

"I think it is better to ride than sit still in the cold," said Margaret. "I shall run out, and tell Miss Gage it is not my fault."

"You will not do any such thing," said Hubert, placing himself in the door-way, "you shall not catch cold for my sins—I am off."

"But Hubert," said Mr. Grey, detaining him, "will you dine with us? Claude will be very glad, I am sure—and if you could prevail on Miss Gage to accompany you, it would give great pleasure to my little niece."

"I am sure Bessy will be very happy,

said Hubert, "as for me, I shall be delighted."

This was said with a distinct bow to Margaret, which left but little doubt of his meaning.

"Only allow me to say to-morrow instead of to-day, because my father goes to a county meeting to-morrow, and so—"

"That will do just as well," said Mr. Grey, "very considerate of you, Hubert."

Mr. Haveloc, who had been standing with some hesitation of manner for some moments, now took a sudden resolution, dashed down the steps, and spoke to Miss Gage. Margaret could see from the window that she greeted him with her usual sweetness of demeanour; and, when her brother was mounted, that she stretched her hand out, which he took with an air of great respect.

Little Margaret, whose brains were somewhat active in giving to every day occurrences the colourings of romance, fancied

that their interview was like that of a Queen with some favoured noble, and as Land's gossip had assigned Mr. Haveloc to Miss Gage in common with a crowd of other suitors, she fancied that, in this instance, there might be some truth in the report. And such a wicked young man! She supposed Miss Gage did not know the dreadful story she had heard about him.

"What a fine young man Hubert Gage has grown," said Mr. Grey, as he returned from the window, "the finest young man I ever saw!"

Margaret coloured as the remark was addressed to her, and went off to her own occupations.

She saw nothing more of Mr. Haveloc during the morning; her studies kept her employed until luncheon, and she had hardly finished her cold chicken when Miss Gage's carriage drove up to the door. She put on her bonnet in a hurry, flew into the hall, and almost ran against Mr. Haveloc, who was coming up the steps at the moment.

He stopped, took off his hat, and handed her into the carriage. Miss Gage greeted her very kindly—asked her which way she would like to drive; gave her orders; drew up the glass and drove off.

After a few general remarks, Margaret coloured, paused, played with her boa, and then said:—

"I should like to talk to you about something, if you would not think me foolish."

"What is it, my dear?" asked Elizabeth, taking Margaret's hand; "never mind if it *is* foolish—we are all foolish sometimes."

"It is such a plague to me, Mr. Haveloc coming," said Margaret. "It spoils everything. I cannot talk to my uncle, or play the organ, or do anything so comfortably now that he is in the house. I cannot stand on the library steps, and read from the shelves;—perhaps you would laugh at this, but you don't know the difference it makes."

"I can very well understand that it does," said Miss Gage, "but Mr. Have-

loc's society is a great happiness to your uncle, and you must weigh that against the embarrassment he makes you feel."

"So I ought," said Margaret.

"I recollect when I knew him, several years ago," said Miss Gage, "although he possessed great powers of pleasing where he was intimate, yet he was a little too reserved in general society."

"And I am sure he is very proud!" said Margaret, eagerly.

Miss Gage laughed at this remark, and made no attempt to exculpate him from the charge: she merely added that she thought him very much altered in appearance, but that a person of his character would be less troublesome as an inmate, to her, than one of a more sociable disposition, since she would very rarely be obliged to enter into conversation with him.

Margaret agreed to this, and the subject was dropped.

Now, had Miss Gage chosen to exercise her wit by jesting with Margaret upon her

timidity instead of calmly talking it over, she would have confirmed her in a silly bashfulness, as much opposed as possible to real modesty. As it was, she felt a sort of composure from having *talked through* a subject she rather dreaded to mention; and her feelings acquired an equilibrium, that very much added to her comfort when she again encountered the person in question. But how few people could have resisted the pleasure of laughing at a young girl about any young man who might chance to be staying in the house.

Mr. Warde came to dinner. Margaret was very glad to see him; but there was so much to be talked over between him and Mr. Haveloc, that there was little time for her to make any historical enquiries. The conversation did not prevent Mr. Haveloc from being very attentive to her, as far as actions went. He took the carving out of her hands—saw that she had every thing she wanted—directed the screen to be altered which protected her but imperfectly

from the fire, and mentioned to her that Richards had brought a whole forest of azalias into the library while she was taking her drive; with which piece of information he began and ended his discourse.

She learned, during dinner, that he was very near-sighted, which circumstance gave her great satisfaction. The certainty that he could not distinguish her across the table, unless he took up his glass, which she had never seen him do, gave her a confidence and a feeling of freedom, which removed one strong objection she had felt to his presence.

The evening passed as usual; as they dined late, the serving of coffee and tea nearly took up the time until they separated. Mr. Warde talked kindly to Margaret about the books she was anxious to read, and Mr. Haveloc played a game of piquet with Mr. Grey. When she saw how very attentive he was to her dear uncle, she could not help wishing that he was less wicked, but as she remarked to herself, it was no business of hers.

CHAPTER VI.

The passions will dispense
To such a wild and rapid eloquence,
Will to the weakest mind their strength impart,
And give the tongue the language of the heart.

CRABBE.

It was a very eventful day for Margaret on which Miss Gage and her brother were to dine at Ashdale, for it might actually be termed a party, and she was to preside at the head of the table.

She took infinite pains with her toilet; chose her very prettiest silk, and allowed her maid as much time as she liked to dress her hair: instead of starting up, as she did on common occasions, after the first half-minute, wringing into a perfect cable the

beautiful profusion of her tresses behind, and fastening them up with a comb to the great discomposure of her attendant. All the time the airy plaits were weaving, which were to form the pretty coiffure, designated as the *antique moderne*, Margaret was convincing herself that she was not taking all this trouble because Hubert Gage was coming. Nothing could be so unlikely, or so undignified; it was entirely on account of his sister Elizabeth.

She was dressed so early, that she had plenty of time to spare. She thought she should like to play on the organ; but Land was busy, so was the footman, she dared not ask the coachman to blow: Mason would, she knew, be shocked at the idea; so she sent down to the gardener's boy, who spent the best part of his time in the kitchen, and he came up, shy and awkward enough, but very willing to do his best. Unfortunately, he occasionally left off blowing to listen with open mouth to her performance, thus causing a sudden stop that

was very provoking to her. She was improving so nicely too—her little foot stole over the pedals with as much ease as her fingers over the notes; and when she was in the midst of a very pretty effect, that sharp cessation of sound quite destroyed her patience.

"There, you naughty little boy," said she, "don't you see the wind is out? You must not do that again!"

The little boy, who was a great deal bigger by the way than herself, *did* do it again, and always in the most provoking places, though the moment she looked he began to blow with renewed vigour.

"I declare," cried Margaret, stamping her foot on the pedals, and producing thereby an awful roar, "I will tell my Uncle Grey the very next time!"

This was not a very formidable threat; but the boy pleaded that she did play so beautiful he could not help it; and she forgot her anger.

Now, at the moment she stamped, one of

the gallery doors opened, and Mr. Haveloc came out, intending to go down to the drawing-room ; but attracted by the singular sound that met his ear, he remained in the doorway listening. He was very much amused by the short dialogue which he overheard, and delighted when Margaret resumed her more regular performance ; for she had that fine sensibility for music which imparts to the finger a charm that cannot be acquired, but which is an absolute requisite to persons of the same temperament.

"There goes seven, Miss," said the boy, as Margaret was bringing to a conclusion one of Handel's choruses.

"How tiresome!" cried Margaret, "Oh, dear! and I promised Mr. Grey that I would always shut up the organ. I shall be late, that I shall! Oh! do hold the candle for me!"

"Allow me to save you the trouble," said Mr. Haveloc, coming forward, "it is the least I can do in return for your music."

"For my music!" gasped Margaret; while all the blunders she had been committing rushed into her mind, turning her quite sick with shame.

"You may trust me to leave all right," said Mr. Haveloc, beginning to put in the stops, "I am used to an organ."

"Oh! thank you, I will then," said Margaret, and taking up her gloves, she lost no time in making her way down stairs.

The Gage's carriage was drawing up as she took her seat beside her uncle. She could not command her complexion, and it rose amazingly as Miss Gage entered with her brother.

Elizabeth was more dressed than at her own house, and poor Margaret ascribed her calm, graceful appearance to the stiff violet watered silk, and the delicate pearl brooch and bracelets which she wore. Her bouquet was composed of geraniums this time, and Margaret began to undervalue her azalias now.

While Mr. Grey was talking to Miss Gage,

Hubert Gage, leaning on the back of Margaret's chair, entered into conversation with an air of so much intimacy, that she could hardly feel shy of him. He enquired about her pets, and she confided to him that she had a beautiful bullfinch which could whistle two tunes, and draw up a bucket of water; and that Mr. Grey had an eagle in the court-yard which had a great many odd ways; and that she had not a lap-dog yet, but that Mr. Grey meant to see about it.

Hubert Gage, with an air of great interest, recommended her to have an Italian greyhound, and then told her that her hands were like snow; but Margaret never could recollect how he managed to introduce that piece of information.

Then Mr. Haveloc came down and planted himself beside Miss Gage's chair until dinner was announced.

Mr. Grey gave his arm to Miss Gage, and Hubert took possession of Margaret, begging her to observe how much more

fortunate he was now, than the last time he had the pleasure of seeing her.

As they entered the dining-room every body was surprised to see Mr. Casement calmly standing before the fire.

Mr. Haveloc, who followed Hubert Gage, caught up his eye-glass, dropped it with an air of great vexation, and exclaimed, in a suppressed tone, "Good Heaven, Hubert! is that fellow not dead yet?"

"I wish anybody could tell me when he *would* die," said Hubert, laughing; "but I am firmly persuaded, for my part, that he is the Wandering Jew."

"Ay! here I am," said Mr. Casement, in reply to Mr. Grey's exclamation of surprise; "Miss Gage, your servant. So you two young fellows are returned at the same time. No fear of your not coming back—eh! a bad shilling! you know the saying."

Hubert Gage burst into a hearty laugh at this address; but Mr. Haveloc knit his brows with an air of extreme disgust.

By this time, as every body was seated, and Hubert helping the soup for Margaret, Mr. Casement bethought himself of something disagreeable to say to her.

"Ain't you very much obliged to me, little woman," he said, "for coming straight in here, and so leaving you to the young sparks? Suppose I had taken you into dinner?

"Mr. Casement," said Miss Gage, in her very calm manner, "you know I always keep you in order. You must not forget I am here."

Mr. Casement made a contortion he meant for a smile, and vowed he was her slave.

Mr. Haveloc told Miss Gage that every body present owed her a vote of thanks. A remark which Mr. Casement did not forget.

When a convenient pause occurred, he leaned forward, and said, in a sufficiently marked tone, "Oh, by the bye, Claude! and how are all our friends at Florence?" Margaret absolutely turned pale, and could

not avoid glancing anxiously at Mr. Haveloc.

He merely replied, taking up his glass to examine the dish he was about to carve. "I did not know, Mr. Casement, that you had any friends in any part of the world."

Margaret was the only person who observed that his hand trembled.

Miss Gage was pleased with his reply, for she knew the ill-natured point of the remark. Hubert laughed so heartily, that he was forced at intervals to beg Margaret's pardon for being so rude. Mr. Grey tried to turn the conversation. Mr. Casement looked sullen; and Mr. Haveloc, still appearing occupied with the dish before him, said, "There are two ways of carving these birds; which do you like best?"

"Oh! the old fashioned way, don't you Sir?" asked Miss Gage of Mr Grey, "it is much the best."

"Yes; all old fashioned ways are in my opinion;" said Mr. Grey smiling, "but then I am an old man."

Margaret could not easily regain her composure of feeling after this incident; she pitied Mr. Haveloc, she admired Miss Gage, and she envied the readiness with which she directed the conversation into other channels until all constraint seemed banished from the party.

In the evening Hubert Gage beset Margaret with entreaties that she would play; and with a feeling of intense misery, she sat down to the piano and played a Fantasia by Moscheles with great delicacy and effect. Miss Gage turned round in the midst of her conversation with Mr. Grey, and told Margaret that she could take no excuses from her in future, now that she had shown how she could perform.

Then Mr. Casement begged Miss Gage to play some old airs, which she did with the utmost good humour; and afterwards sang whatever she was asked with an ease and sweetness that delighted Margaret; who for her own part would have much

preferred dying at once to singing before half-a-dozen people.

In the midst of the singing, Mr. Gage begged Margaret to tell him the names of some fine prints he was looking at, which she did as far as she knew them; while in return, when he came to any very beautiful face in the collection, he informed her that it was strikingly like her's, with any little additional compliment that his fancy suggested. Margaret was not quite so overpowered by this as might have been expected, for she was listening all the time to a conversation between Miss Gage and Mr. Haveloc.

Elizabeth had risen from the piano, and was standing with a sheet of music in her hand talking to Mr. Haveloc about Metastasio: this led to some remarks upon the early poetry, and the early paintings of Italy, and the infancy of art in general.

Miss Gage remarked that the infancy of poetry was unmarked by those signs of

feebleness and inaccuracy that denoted the first stages of painting.

"It was true," he replied, "the imagination was at once transferred into words, unfettered by those mechanical means which were needed to express thought upon the canvass; because the soul was the elder and the nobler born, and its work was performed without the tedious interval of experience which was necessary to bring to perfection the physical powers. He thought the best that could be said of painting was, that it was a high order of imitation."

Miss Gage mentioned the delight bequeathed to a succession of ages by a beautiful picture or statue.

"It is true," he said, "but it is a delight for which the eye must be trained, and the mind prepared. It is in a great measure an artificial enjoyment; for I need not remind Miss Gage that the raptures of most persons with regard to art are purely affected. But every poet who deserves the

name, appeals at once to the common and spontaneous feelings of mankind; and can be discerned, not by the ignorant indeed, but without any especial cultivation."

Miss Gage said something of the difficulties of art, and the respect due to those who surmounted them.

"I confess," said Mr. Haveloc, "I cannot see much to respect in a successful painter. I allow him great acquirement; a highly trained eye; the mastery of a very difficult and laborious process, and certainly a perception of the most ingenious arrangement of his subject. But, good Heaven! at what an immeasurable distance are these from the gifts that constitute a poet. Where is the exquisite atmosphere of music that suggests to him his delicious rhyme? Where the invisible and mystic shadows that invite him to weave his tissue of unreal scenes? Where the deep and solemn philosophy which reveals to him the strange sources of those emotions which are known to common men by their outward workings

alone? No, Miss Gage, I cannot admit toil is a sign of worth, for I know many baubles that are difficult of attainment."

"Ah! you think all that very fine!" said Mr. Casement looking up from his game of piquet, "but it is sheer nonsense every word of it."

Mr. Haveloc did not deign to utter a word in reply to this flattering tribute. Elizabeth smiled, and moved to the table where Hubert and Margaret were looking at the engravings.

"Do not these," she asked, "go far to shake your opinion? And is not the ideal in art worthy of as much veneration as the highest efforts of the poet?"

"I must be uncourteous enough," said Mr. Haveloc, "to differ from you in your estimate of the Ideal over the Real in art. I do not think that the purely Ideal either elevates or instructs; in fact unless the Real is the basis of the design, it is an illusion that only makes one discontented with nature."

"But in that case, the antique—" said Miss Gage.

"It is the exquisite reality of the greatest works of ancient art which makes them so invaluable;" said Mr. Haveloc, "the form may be ideal, but the expression is real. It is the concentration of all nature in its fitness for the quality or emotion intended to be displayed, that constitutes their inapproachable beauty and grace. Beauty being the proportion of form; and grace, the proportion of action to the feeling meant to be expressed."

"I am not quite willing to cede the Ideality of the ancient statues," said Miss Gage; "but I can conceive that a different order of excellence is demanded of sculpture from that of painting."

"For sculpture is to painting what Epic is to Tragic poetry. The External against the Internal;" rejoined Mr. Haveloc, "the one demanding perfection of form—the other relying chiefly upon truth of expression."

"Guido then ought to have been a sculptor," said Miss Gage.

"Yes!" he replied. "In Guido's pictures the Ideal prevails after this fashion; in the omission of accident, or defect in his forms—that is, in the omission of character or individuality. They are beautiful embellishments to a room—great technical achievements; but they do not appeal to the depths of the heart, although much beauty will often affect the feelings."

"I understand the distinction," said Elizabeth, "Murillo appeals to the sympathies by taking beings made of common clay, forms that have existed—more powerful agents than only such as might exist—and elevating them by the profound sensibilities with which he has endowed them."

"Exactly," returned Mr. Haveloc. "His Virgin, in his great picture of the Holy Family, is a woman of humble life, in simple garments, and not remarkable for beauty of form; he has painted her with faultless truth, and inspired her face with

an expression of maternal love, so tender, so earnest, so overwhelming in its fulness and its anxiety, that I should think few people could view it without being deeply affected."

"It is only when truth is outdone," said Miss Gage, "that I object to the Ideal. As for instance, when Raphael, a name I do not mention but with the deepest respect, depicts the Virgin Mary with all the delicate beauty of a pampered Princess, and attired in the most gorgeous garments."

"Yes," he said, "although he has thrown into the features all the refinement of intellect and tenderness of feeling of which woman is capable; high-born, caressed, educated, magnificent woman. I do consider that Murillo has bequeathed a grander lesson to the future, has achieved more in art, and awakened our sympathies at a purer source, by his strict adherence to nature, than Raphael by his exquisite and ideal conception of female grace."

"In fact," said Miss Gage, "to go a

little aside of the old saying, you think that truth is the well from which every poet and every artist should draw their inspiration; and that no important, no ultimate good can result from any exaggeration, even when the falsehood is enlisted on the side of unearthly and transcendant beauty."

"I need not say, Miss Gage," said Mr. Haveloc, "that I could not have expressed my meaning so completely as you have done."

"You young fellows," said Mr. Casement, rising from the table, "you think you know everything now-a-days."

Margaret who had been looking up in Miss Gage's face listening—her features radiant with breathless and earnest attention— looked round at Mr. Casement with something like horror in her countenance. She was shocked that he should interrupt a discourse so replete to her with new and interesting ideas.

Mr. Haveloc's scorn prevented his taking

up the remark; Miss Gage who was well accustomed to tolerate Mr. Casement, turned round with some playfulness of manner:

"If I were not going away, Mr. Casement," she said, "I hear the carriage, Hubert—I should take you very seriously to task. Pray, Mr. Haveloc, before I go, acknowledge that Murillo is a poet of the highest order, and an exception to those artists whom you have praised for mere mechanical excellence."

"I do acknowledge," he replied, "that in his hands the pencil becomes a sceptre, to which every enlightened mind must do homage."

When Mr. Haveloc returned from seeing Miss Gage to her carriage, he found Mr. Grey just concluding his encomiums upon Margaret for having behaved so very prettily to his guests. He turned round and asked Mr. Haveloc if Miss Gage did not sing charmingly.

Mr. Haveloc hesitated a little, and at

length said, " that her singing was rather sensible than impassioned."

" Why really, Claude," said Mr. Grey, " in a wife I should prefer the sensible style."

" My dear Sir," returned Mr. Haveloc with a short laugh, " I have no idea of presuming to aspire to Miss Gage's hand. I imagine that even the industry of scandal could attribute nothing to our intercourse but the most distant acquaintance."

He spoke with some bitterness, but Mr. Grey who was singularly exempt from irritable feelings himself, seldom detected them in others.

" I don't know, Claude," he said; " I thought she looked splendid this evening. She is the handsomest woman in the county; and when I saw you talking so nicely together, I wished with all my heart it might come to something."

" I wish her a better fate, Sir," said Mr. Haveloc turning away.

" Why, Claude, ay to be sure! One should not talk of such matters before

little people. Going away my little pet? Good night—sleep well!"

Margaret had a great deal to think about when she found herself in her own room. Miss Mason tangled and untangled her hair at pleasure; her thoughts were too busy in recalling all that had been said and done that evening. She had heard persons talk who possessed ideas; who had thought, and formed opinions upon different subjects; this was such a different thing from school knowledge, that she felt confused for some time in the uncertainty she felt as to the means of acquiring such mental power herself. She determined at least to be guided by Miss Gage, who she was sure would direct her as to the books she ought to read; and perhaps in time she might become wise enough to talk to persons who knew as much as Mr. Haveloc. She wished again that he had not been so wicked; but she remembered with displeasure Mr. Casement's impertinent allusion to his former conduct. She was convinced he was very

sorry for it, and though she sincerely wished him out of the house, she was employed in pitying him, when Miss Mason having concluded her duties, wished her young lady good night.

CHAPTER VII.

A melancholy, grounded and resolved
Received into a habit argues love,
Or deep impression of strong discontents.

THE LADY'S TRIAL.

Since my coming home I have found
More sweets in one unprofitable dream
Than in my life's whole pilgrimage.

SUN'S DARLING.

Now Mr. Haveloc was at this time enjoying the delightful consciousness that he had been making a great simpleton of himself; but this is a state of feeling which indicates some superiority of character; for your common people when they have been exposing themselves to the derision of all their acquaintance, generally parade themselves with all the dignity of a

peacock, and feel convinced that they have been behaving with singular discretion. This state of feeling was agreeably relieved by the knowledge that people had said a great many things of him which were untrue, and which were particularly exasperating to a person of his temperament.

They had filled up the outline of his attentions to Mrs. Maxwell Dorset—attentions far more marked than was consistent with propriety—by a variety of incidents, extremely wrong, but, which was much worse in his eyes, exceedingly ridiculous. They had exaggerated the regard which the lady had abundantly professed for him into an idolatry that was painfully absurd; and they invented a narrative of an unsuccessful attempt on his part to carry her off, which drove him from Florence, and very nearly frantic into the bargain. As he returned to his senses, he contemplated Mrs. Maxwell Dorset with unmixed contempt and disgust. Very exacting and fastidious in his ideas of women, he could

imagine nothing more opposed to all his demands of female delicacy and dignity, than this woman, who had for a time blinded him by her flattery, and her foolish and criminal preference. He was angry with her, and still more angry with himself, and yet more enraged against society at large for the unceremonious manner in which they had discoursed of his proceedings; and his feelings of dissatisfaction on the subject were by no means diminished by the knowledge that he was not the first person by very many whom her artifices had enslaved. This fact which of course reached his ears when it was too late—for your friends never tell you of a thing when you might profit by it—in divesting her attachment of the complimentary aspect it might otherwise have worn, opened his eyes more effectually than a score of homilies could have done.

In this happy frame of mind, he came to Ashdale, thinking that it would be a relief to plunge into solitude with his friend, Mr.

Grey. He was very much annoyed to find that Margaret was residing with her uncle; but Mr. Grey pressed him so warmly to take up his abode with him for a time, that he hardly knew how to decline his hospitality. He could scarcely tell Mr. Grey that he detested the idea of remaining under the same roof with his niece. It was a great relief to him when he found that Margaret was entirely different from any young lady he had ever seen. She never entered into conversation with him, and never, if she could help it, remained in the room with him for a single moment. He began to be disappointed that she invariably stole out after her uncle as he left the breakfast-table, and came down into the drawing-room exactly as the bell rang for dinner. He became more and more struck with her beauty and her simplicity, and he felt a curiosity to know whether her intellect at all responded to the beautiful countenance which varied with every shade of thought that floated through her mind.

It so happened that he was not able to pursue his investigations for some time, for some affair of business required his immediate return to his own home. He mentioned this to Mr. Grey as they were standing round the fire just before dinner, and would have given much to have seen Margaret's face at the moment.

It was too late when they took their places at the table to hope that any expression of emotion, or surprise would be visible. Indeed it was not being quite so reasonable as men ought to be upon those subjects, to expect that she should regret the departure of a visitor, who, though perfectly courteous to her, had been remarkably deficient in those attentions which a beautiful girl might almost expect from one of the other sex. In fact, Margaret was exceedingly glad to hear the news. She felt that among other advantages, the library would be no longer forbidden-ground to her. She would again be able to loiter among the books and maps,

instead of carrying those volumes she wished to read into her own room, and sending them back by Land when she had done.

Mr. Haveloc was always in the library, reading or writing, which was one of his most serious offences in her eyes. As for her attempting to attract or interest him, she would have considered such a thing as seriously and entirely out of the question. She knew very well that the girls at school would have called him a capital match, and she knew also that there would have been no end to their jests if they had heard that she was staying in the house with so desirable an article of property as a rich young man. But Margaret was romantic. She thought him very much in the way; and she was rather shocked that any one so immoral should help her to salad, or to orange-jelly.

"The Somertons are come back, Claude," said Mr. Grey; "I wish you were not

going away just now. They always make the place gay."

"Thank you, Sir," returned Mr. Haveloc, "I dare say I shall not much regret losing the Somertons."

"Let me see," continued Mr. Grey, "Blanche must have been about sixteen when you left England."

"Very likely, Sir, I never attempt to guess a lady's age."

"I hardly know," said Mr. Grey, musing over his scalloped oysters, "which of them is considered the beauty; but I rather think it is Blanche."

"Oh both, my dear Sir," replied Mr. Haveloc, "Mrs. Somerton tells everybody that each of her daughters is the belle of whatever place they may be staying at."

"A great satisfaction to their mother, I am sure," said Mr. Grey, never dreaming that there was anything like satire in Mr. Haveloc's remark; "and very nice companions they will be to my little niece

during the summer; perhaps we may prevail on Mrs. Somerton to spare one of her daughters sometimes to stay here for a week or two."

Mr. Haveloc knit his brows, and looked so much discomposed at this proposition that Margaret was perfectly astonished. How could it concern him if her uncle succeeded in obtaining a companion for her? Some of the wonder she felt must have made itself very visible in her face, for he turned and said to her in a constrained voice, "I hope you will find much enjoyment in the society of the Miss Somertons."

"I shall like to know them," said Margaret quietly, "but Miss Gage is kind enough to prevent my ever feeling the want of society."

"Very kind she is," said Mr. Grey; "but my love, I know young people like to be together; now, Blanche is hardly a year older than you are."

"You see," said Mr. Haveloc smiling,

"that you are fated to become intimate with the Somertons."

Margaret smiled too. She recollected that at school she had made no one intimacy; and she thought it was very easily avoided with any person whom you did not completely approve—especially if you did not live under the same roof.

Nothing more was said during dinner; but in the evening when Margaret was making tea, and her uncle dozing in his arm-chair, Mr. Haveloc, contrary to his custom, took a chair next to her's, and after a short pause—for the subject was rather embarrassing—said, "I am afraid you thought me guilty of some rudeness at dinner in allowing you to perceive the surprise I felt at your uncle's proposition. I am aware that I have no right to interest myself in your affairs."

It would have been difficult to convince any body of the extent of Margaret's shyness, for she had the advantage of a very self-possessed manner; therefore, though

her heart seemed dying within her, at the effort of making a reply to such a speech, her sweet voice was as calm as ever, when she answered:

"I did not think you rude at all, Mr. Haveloc, for you said nothing; and it would be hard indeed to deny people the free exercise of their thoughts."

"Thank you," said Mr. Haveloc with energy. "I will not be so presumptuous as to offer you any advice; but I hope you will allow me to recommend that you ask Miss Gage her candid opinion of those young ladies. She is so much your friend, that I believe she will have no hesitation in giving it."

"I will, indeed," said Margaret, "you could not have given me better advice."

She smiled and blushed as she spoke, and looked so very lovely, that it was no wonder Mr. Haveloc retained his chair, and made some attempt to draw her into conversation.

Mr. Grey woke up, took his cup of tea,

and looked very much pleased to see them talking together, although no two strangers could carry on a more distant and disjointed discourse. He so completely recognized Margaret as a child, that his fancy never suggested to him the possibility of a future attachment being formed between his favourite ward and his beautiful little niece. He merely thought to himself that if Claude would but brighten up a little, and forget all that Italian business, it would make the evenings much more cheerful for poor Margaret.

His musings were interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Casement, whose "old woman," as he informed Mr. Grey, had two or three village gossips to drink tea with her, and therefore he had been driven out this miserable night to take his chance of a cup of coffee, and a game of piquet with his friend, Mr. Grey.

"And glad enough you must be to see me," he remarked, "for I suppose these two young people chatter together, and

leave you to count the bars of the grate all the evening.

Mr. Grey eagerly disclaimed being ever left to the consoling occupation suggested by his friend.

"Never," he said, "were there kinder or more attentive companions than Claude Haveloc and his niece."

Margaret rang for more coffee, and made up her mind with a look of calm endurance to pass a disagreeable evening. Among other annoyances to her, Mr. Casement was very fond of music, and always insisted on her playing to him while he was engaged at cards.

Mr. Haveloc, highly indignant at being accused of chattering, flung himself into an arm-chair at another table; begged Margaret's pardon when she half rose to give Mr. Casement his cup, made some show of taking it from her, and then threw himself back in his chair with the Quarterly Review in his hand, and a very tolerable share of contempt in his features.

Then Mr. Casement managed to teaze Margaret by asking her to play 'The Roast Beef of Old England;' or, 'The Girl I left behind me;' airs that she had never heard of; and by turning into ridicule the names and compositions of Doehler and Moscheles, with whose works she was familiar. And every now and then he looked up from his game, and asked Mr. Haveloc what he was about, that he did not turn over the young lady's book, and praise her music; until at last Margaret left the piano in a great pet, and sat down to her netting.

"Well, now, little woman," said Mr. Casement, as soon as he had won his game, "how do you get on with Hubert Gage?"

Mr. Haveloc's eyes were full upon her, and she felt the question to be embarrassing. She blushed, indeed, but she drew herself up, and replied that she got on with him quite well enough. Her acquaintance was with his sister.

"And this young spark, too," said Mr.

Casement, turning to Mr. Haveloc. "What! you are letting him slip through your fingers? He goes away to-morrow, I hear."

Margaret, changing from red to white, persevered with her netting. Mr. Haveloc dashed his book down on the table, and stalked out of the room; muttering something as he went about "the greatest bore in existence;" and Mr. Grey began a gentle remonstrance with his friend on the impropriety of talking in such a manner to young people.

"They don't like it, Casement. These jokes never please the parties concerned. There's Claude gone out of the room in a rage, and my poor little Margaret seems disposed to go out of the room after him."

"I think," said Mr. Casement, with a chuckling laugh, "I tell you what, in my young days, the fancies of old people were to be consulted. Now, we have nothing to do but to think how we can please the young ones."

"Nobody can accuse you of that, Mr.

Casement," said Margaret, who had taken refuge by the side of Mr. Grey.

"Egad, that's true enough, Miss Peggy," returned Mr. Casement. "No one shall ever tax me with helping to spoil the rising generation."

Mr. Grey said he was no advocate for spoiling people; but he really could not see why such silly remarks should be made on persons; that Claude Haveloc did not like to be the subject of Mr. Casement's raillery, and therefore he did hope—

"Why," interrupted Mr. Casement, "the remark, as you call it, that made Master Claude bounce out of the room in such tragedy fashion, was addressed to this little woman here. I asked her, as any body would, how she could let such a sweet-tempered, well-behaved young gentleman slip through her fingers."

"Well—well—the child does not like it;" said Mr. Grey, rather shortly.

"Beg your pardon. Miss Peggy, like other young ladies, has no sort of objection

to a hint of that kind. But you don't relish it, that is very plain; so I'll mind my manners for the present, at least. Hadn't you better step out to the young man, my dear, and say that its all right, and he may come back again?"

Angry as Margaret was, she could not help smiling at the idea of being sent out to call Mr. Haveloc back like a child. She was very angry, however, and said, that she supposed Mr. Haveloc would return when he chose; but that she imagined few people would be longer than they could help in Mr. Casement's society.

"She is too sharp for you, Casement;" said Mr. Grey, laughing.

"I have raised a hornet's nest about my ears, I think," said Mr. Casement, laughing in his turn. "I did not know the child had so much spirit. Well, my old woman, will be on the look out for me, so I will wish you good evening."

As soon as the door closed on his friend, Mr. Grey began to find all the excuses he

could for his rudeness. Nobody, he affirmed, had a better heart than Mr. Casement, although his manners might lead a good many people to doubt the fact. He was sure that if any body was in distress, Mr. Casement would do them a kindness if he could; and, after all, that was the main point—the disposition was of more importance than the manner.

Margaret was quite ready to admit the truth of this observation; she merely asked, casually, "whether Mr. Casement had been ever known to relieve anybody, because there is always opportunity to show kindness among the poor, if people are inclined to do it."

Mr. Grey said, "he did not know any particular instance of Mr. Casement's good works; but he was not the less convinced that he had the disposition to be kind."

Margaret smiled, and kept her own opinion in silence.

Mr. Haveloc returned to the room soon after;—replied to some qualifying remark

of Mr. Grey's, that Mr. Casement was a pest to society, and worse than all the plagues of Egypt; and then, taking up his book again, went on reading with much apparent tranquillity.

Margaret continued her netting by the fire-side, and seemed to be quite unconscious of his presence. Mr. Grey, satisfied that the storm had blown over, soon went to sleep, which he frequently did, until roused by the entrance of Land with the candlesticks and a great bunch of keys.

Suddenly Mr. Haveloc started forward, and picked up a mesh which had fallen from Margaret's work-box. She had been so much accustomed to all those attentions from him, which do not involve any speaking, that this sudden movement did not surprise her. She took her mesh, bowed her head in silence, and went on with her work. She really did not know, for some minutes, that he was leaning on the top of the screen he had placed between her and the fire, and looking earnestly into her face.

"I hope," he said, as soon as she happen-

ed to lift her eyes from her netting, "I do hope that miserable old man has not annoyed you very much. I am sure you must feel his vulgarity. If it was not for Mr. Grey, I—but I am afraid he is rather too old to be thrown out of the window."

"Oh, dear, yes!" said Margaret, frightened at the very idea of such extreme measures. "I don't very much mind him now, I certainly did, at first. But my uncle says he has—some—good qualities."

This confession came out slowly, as if she was by no means willing to admit the possibility of such a thing.

"Mr. Grey has so many good qualities," said Mr. Haveloc, "that he makes over a few, in imagination, to his neighbours. That is the only way I can account for such an assertion on his part."

Margaret looked up and laughed at this remark. She had a charming child-like laugh.

"Perhaps," said she, after a short pause, "perhaps, in time, he will leave off teazing me."

"Never!" returned Mr. Haveloc, "never while he has breath."

"Then it can't be helped," said Margaret, with a sigh. "But there is one comfort, my dear uncle always takes my part."

"Who would not?" muttered Mr. Haveloc.

Margaret did not laugh at this remark. She blushed instead, and busied herself very earnestly with the beads on her silk.

"You are about something very pretty!" said Mr. Haveloc, bending over her work.

"It is a great deal of trouble," said Margaret, "but it will look very well when it is done. It is a purse with beads."

"I am afraid I shall not see it finished," said Mr. Haveloc. "It will be done, and sent off long before I come back."

"It takes me—oh, let me see!—about a week," said Margaret.

"Not longer? Why you must furnish all your friends with purses."

"But I seldom make them. This is only the second I have made with beads; one to

learn by—and this other, to give to—somebody."

"To Mr. Grey!"

"You cannot be sure of that. It is a very good guess; but I have other friends. I might mean it for Mr. Warde."

"You glanced at Mr. Grey when you spoke of giving it away."

"Did I, indeed? You should not watch people."

"Is that a general rule? Or only applicable to the present company?"

Margaret laughed, and made no answer.

"Pray, has Mr. Warde begun to teach you Latin yet?" he asked.

"No," said Margaret.

"How is that? Are you afraid of your complexion? I think Mr. Grey threatened you with premature age, if you meddled with Latin. Did not he?"

"That is not the reason," said Margaret, "but I am too busy at present."

"I should like very much to know what is your favourite study just now. Waltzing, I think."

"Waltzing, indeed!" said Margaret; "I could waltz years ago."

"You won't tell me then, what pursuit engrosses you at present; it must be something mysterious. Judicial astrology?"

Margaret turned away laughing, "I wish first that it was true, and next that I knew it," she said.

"Would you then like to read the future?" he asked.

"Perhaps not, when it came to the point," she replied.

"What, Land, here already?" said Mr. Grey, waking up at the jingle of the keys and candlesticks; "who would believe it was eleven o'clock?"

"Not I for one," whispered Mr. Haveloc, as he moved to open the door for Margaret.

She did not know how it was. She supposed he must have held out his hand; but she found herself actually shaking hands with him for the first time.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ray. You have a merry heart if you can guide it.

Fol. Yes faith, so, so; I laugh not at those whom I fear; I fear not those whom I love; and I love not any whom I laugh not at. Pretty strange humour, is 't not?

Ray. To any one that knows you not, it is.

THE SUN'S DARLING.

THE next morning Mr. Haveloc went to his estate as he had intended; and Margaret found herself again in undisturbed possession of Ashdale. But for fear she should enjoy her liberty too much, Hubert Gage found his way to the house almost every morning. He knew very well that when he could not obtain his sister's company, Margaret would not come down to see him, if he seemed to pay a formal visit, but he always

contrived to have some message, or some piece of music, some excellent advice about her greyhound, or other trifling passport to her presence; and when Elizabeth did go with him, it was very easy to loiter the whole morning there; that is to say, from a little before luncheon to a little before dinner.

Mr. Grey's only idea on the subject was, that Hubert Gage was a very fine young man, and very attentive to his sister.

Captain Gage was more clear-sighted; he told Elizabeth that Hubert seemed to have taken a fancy to Margaret; that she was a very nice little girl, well born and handsome; that he understood she had ten thousand pounds for her fortune, and it was very likely that Mr. Grey would leave her something very considerable; so that a younger son, as Hubert was, would have reason to think himself very well off if he could win her. That they were a couple of children, and that it was quite a consideration for the future. He should get him afloat again as

as soon he could, and if he came back in the same mind with regard to Margaret, then they would see about it.

Just at this time, the stability of his attachment was put to a slight test.

When he first returned home, his father wrote to his brother George who was with his regiment in Ireland, urging him to obtain leave of absence, that he might come over and see his brother. Captain Gage thus counted on having two of his sons at home together, for he was very much attached to his children, and nothing gave him greater satisfaction than to have them about him.

Now George Gage liked his brother very much, and would have had no objection to pay his father a visit, but it happened that a steeple-chase, in which he was deeply interested, was coming off at that time, so he wrote to say that he could not get leave of absence, which was so far true that he had er applied for it; but strongly recom-nded Hubert to take the trouble of cros-

sing over to see him, holding out many inducements to that effect; the most powerful of which was the steeple-chase.

Captain Gage, who had passed his life in the delusion that it was impossible for a gentleman to swerve by a hair's breadth from the truth, firmly believed his son's statement, and advised Hubert to set off at once for Ireland. It was provoking enough, he said, that George could not get leave at present, but since there was a way for them to meet, why the best thing was to avail himself of it without delay.

He was very glad, he said to Elizabeth, to find by George's letter, how very anxious he was to have Hubert with him; for there was nothing so delightful as to see the members of a family attached to each other.

Elizabeth acceded to this remark, although she had not as firm a persuasion of her brother's warmth of feeling as her father had.

So Hubert set off in a day or two; after

having called at Ashdale to take what he intended to be a very impressive farewell of Margaret; but it so happened that the antics of her Italian greyhound, which had become entangled in its silver chain, amused them both so highly, that they spent the whole time in laughing, so that when he rose to go, it was as much as he could manage to make his adieux intelligible.

Mrs. Somerton and her youngest daughter had returned to the vicarage, where they spent that part of the year which was not passed in visiting among their relatives and friends. The eldest daughter had been invited by an aunt to spend the season in London, and Blanche took up her abode in the retired village of Ashdale with very decided feelings of discontent and mortification.

Now I am sorry to say that Blanche Somerton, although very pretty, was not very good. She was rather tall, and slightly made, with very small head, hands, and feet. Her complexion was delicately

pale, and her face like a child's with bright black eyes, a short nose, and a pretty mouth always half open and displaying a set of small and pearly teeth. But as a set off to these attractions, she hardly ever told the truth, even in the veriest trifles. She would tell a falsehood about the colour of a ribbon, and would say that a friend wore a white dress, simply because it happened to be green. Sometimes these mistakes assumed a more serious character, but if she was found out in any of them she merely laughed.

They were very poor. Her mother was always embarrassed in money matters, and although she had recourse to many contrivances to eke out her small income, they were insufficient to keep her out of debt. Had it not been for Mr. Warde's frequent kindness, I really believe the poor woman would have found her way to a prison. Their's was bitter poverty; far more bitter and hard to bear than the physical poverty of the poor. Their's was the constant

effort at maintaining an appearance amo
their friends, almost all of whom were ir
condition of life superior to their ow
The wearing anxiety of heavy and increasi
debts, and the dread lest the fact shou
become known, and prevent the girls fro
settling. She had applied so often a
drawn so largely upon Mr. Warde, th
she could not reasonably expect that l
would do much more to assist her. Sl
was again in debt, yet she continued
order at every house, where she had ar
credit left, all sorts of finery for herself an
her daughters, in the hope that it migl
facilitate their establishment. She thougl
under these circumstances that it would b
advisable for Blanche to marry Hube
Gage. He was a second son, and a Lieu
tenant in the Navy. These were not agree
able facts, but she took it for granted h
would be made a Commander in a year o
two, and then he might afford to marry i
his father chose to "behave handsomely;'
a comprehensive term, which seems to

mean, a behaviour as opposed as possible to what you have any right to expect.

But although Mrs. Somerton sketched out a plan of action with great ease and rapidity, it was necessary that she should engage her daughter to carry it out, or her trouble would be in vain. These cabinet councils were seldom of a very placid character. It was, perhaps, natural that poverty should have embittered Mrs. Somerton's temper—it was never very even—and at this period it might be aptly described by the word fractious. One of Blanche's greatest faults was, that she would never submit in silence to her mother's peevish remonstrances, although they seldom made her angry; she either laughed, or turned them into ridicule.

Mrs. Somerton now stated the case to her daughter as strongly as she could, reproached her with being still single, reminded her that sailors were very easily attracted, and urged her to lose no time in supplanting Margaret, who she said must

be a shockingly forward little creature to have made herself already the talk of the place with Hubert Gage. Blanche was lying on the sofa reading a novel, and the only notice she took of her mother's eloquence was to nod her head, and turn over a page.

Mrs. Somerton naturally grew irritable and impetuous, and it was not until she was fairly angry that her daughter threw aside the book, and joined in the conversation.

"Yes—yes. Dear me! don't disturb yourself," said the amiable Blanche. "I mean to detach Hubert from that pretty little doll; but I shall not throw myself away upon a beggar, and a second son, I assure you."

"Hubert Gage is not a beggar," interposed Mrs. Somerton, "he has five hundred a year of his own."

"The mighty sum!" exclaimed Blanche, "but I intend to have somebody else."

"Well, let me hear who it is?"

"Do you suppose I mean to tell you?" asked Blanche, "pray let me read in peace."

"Is it the eldest Gage? Because I can tell you he is not to be caught."

"Yes," retorted Blanche, "it is likely I should go on a pilgrimage to Cork for the purpose of making George Gage an offer. That is so like you!"

Mrs. Somerton was highly exasperated at this reply, and upbraided Blanche with obstinacy and ingratitude, and want of feeling, and want of prudence, until her exordium was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Warde. It was a contrast which would have struck painfully upon some people, to see the kind old gentleman come in, quite unconscious of the occupation of his sister and niece, engrossed with the cares of his parish, full of some touching history of want and sorrow, which he would sit down, and relate at full length, not believing that any one could hear it without interest. Years ago, when Blanche was a

child, she would have cried heartily at such a recital, and have done her best to send some relief to the sufferers; but time and bad training had done their work. She cared less about the matter than if an accident had happened to her spaniel, and was turning over in her mind, the trimming she would have to her next bonnet, while she went through the proper exclamations during her uncle's narrative.

About this time some races were held, at which all the neighbourhood were to attend. There was a ball in the evening, and Captain Gage desired to fill his house with company, that they might go in a party to the race and ball. Miss Gage asked Margaret to stay with her during these festivities, and her father sent an invitation to Mrs. Somerton and her daughter, which was gladly accepted. Hubert Gage was on his road home, and was bringing his brother George with him. He had obtained leave suddenly, for he recollected the spring races, and had some

curiosity to see Margaret. It had been difficult to make Hubert talk of any body else, and he thought if she was really very beautiful, and had slender ancles, and a good prospect of inheriting Mr. Grey's property, besides her own ten thousand pounds, she *might* do for him. She was worth looking after at any rate; and as these things can seldom be transacted by proxy, he was forced to take the trouble of coming over to decide upon her merits.

CHAPTER IX.

Ma pur mostrava anchor grand' arroganza,
Tanto superbo havea l'aspetto fiero,
E qualunche il mirasse in su Bajardo,
Direbbe, quest'è 'l fior d'ogni gagliardo.

BOIARDO.

A few minutes before Margaret was setting out for Chirke Weston, Mr. Grey called her into the library, where he was standing at one of the windows, with a letter in his hand.

Margaret threaded her way through the heavy carved oak furniture, and joined her uncle. A groom was leading a beautiful bay horse slowly to and fro before the windows.

"Oh, uncle! is it really—I can hardly

believe that beautiful creature is actually for me."

"Yes, my child, if he suits, which I feel no doubt of—for Claude is very careful, and he writes me word that the horse was the property of a lady. You will meet him at the Gages, and he comes on here after the ball. You may tell him, I take it very kind that he bore in mind that I was looking out for a horse, and that I feel sure I shall buy him."

Margaret much as she felt obliged to Mr. Haveloc for having found her a horse, had no intention of giving him Mr. Grey's message. It was an exertion to which she could not feel equal, unless he should introduce the subject.

She arrived at Chirke Weston about an hour before dinner, and having made her toilet, came down to the drawing-room with some trepidation; for Miss Gage had told her that there was a large party expected.

Sir Evan and Lady Conway were already

in the room with their two daughters. The girls were tall, bright-eyed, dark, dashing, and well-dressed: they were practising the Mazourka, which was then just beginning to turn people's heads, and looked so formidable to poor Margaret, that she involuntarily shrank closer to the side of her friend Elizabeth. They left off their dancing to be introduced to Margaret, and stood clustered round the fire, talking with more ease and friendliness than she would have imagined from their appearance. She rose a step in Miss Conway's opinion, when she said she knew the Mazourka, and another step or two when she avowed that she liked it very much.

Harriet, the younger sister, fixed her immense dark eyes upon her, and then said, laughing, "You are too young to be stared at—but it is a great temptation."

Margaret felt glad that she had come to that determination, but she liked the appearance of Miss Harriet more than that of her sister.

She appeared to be in very ill-health; her hair had been cut off in an illness, and was now beginning to grow in tendrils all round her small head. She was very thin and pale, and her dress was made high, and finished with costly lace. And whenever a person ventures upon such a toilet, it gives an air of 'retenue' to the figure, which might almost point out to other women, that there is a little want of refinement in the wanton exposure with which they too often favour the public. Nothing, on that score, however, could be urged against Elizabeth and Margaret, who though they conformed to fashion, were careful to mark a distinction in their dress between a gentlewoman and an opera-dancer.

Mrs. Somerton and her daughter now made their appearance; then some people who were entire strangers to Margaret; then Mr. Conway with his glass in his eye; and after him Hubert Gage and Mr. Haveloc.

These last both made their way to Mar-

garet at the same time. Mr. Haveloc merely made the usual enquiries about herself and her uncle, and then leaned against the mantle-piece in perfect silence. Hubert Gage had more to say. He had to describe his passage and his visit to Ireland, and all the things which happened on his return. He had to invent a storm, which made Margaret turn pale; and a variety of dialogues between the passengers upon their supposed danger, which set her laughing merrily.

Blanche Somerton, who was sitting near, did not quite like this prolonged conversation. She turned round and summoned him to her side.

"I am so sorry to trouble you, Mr. Hubert," she said, "but do look at my bouquet. I came away in such a hurry—see, it will not fit my bouquetière; the stalks are too long."

"That is a difficulty very easy to remedy," said Hubert, taking the bouquet from her. "Now I wish young ladies were

always as modest in their demands; they do ask one such impossible things sometimes."

"No, but what sort of things?" asked Blanche. "Do tell me, I so long to know. I really believe that you are very severe upon women."

"By no means. I am too sincere an admirer of the fair sex to be exacting. Stay, this is not quite right yet—let me shorten these stalks again."

"You will spoil that nice penknife, I am afraid."

"That is not of the slightest consequence," said he laughing, "particularly as it is not my property."

"Then you mean to say that if it was yours—"

"I should feel double pleasure in sacrificing it of course. Dinner already! Now you must take my arm, you see. I have not quite finished the arrangement of your flowers. It is certainly a beautiful bouquet. I hardly know which to admire

most, the flowers or the bonquetière. Quite new this sort of thing—is it not?

Every body was rising and pairing off—Hubert Gage, with Blanche on his arm, sauntered past Margaret, arranging the bouquet as he walked along.

Margaret looked after him with some surprise; his attendance had been a thing that she was so certain of late to meet with, that she could scarcely comprehend his transferring it to somebody else. There was a little mortification in her mind for a minute, for no one likes to be robbed of an admirer, however willing she may be to give him up. But she understood it in a moment. Love hangs on such a slender thread with every one, that she could never, and did never regard Hubert Gage with a warmer interest than what might belong to a pleasant acquaintance. She was too romantic, too exacting in her ideas of love to suppose, for a moment, that a man who once entertained a serious thought of her could be engrossed in her presence by another woman.

Mr. Haveloc was at her side almost as soon as Hubert passed, and she felt grateful for the attention. It prevented the awkwardness of seeming to wait till some one was desired to take her in to dinner.

Just as all the company were arranging themselves round the table, George Gage clattered into the room exactly as he came off his journey, not appearing to have thought it worth while to undergo the trouble of dressing for dinner. He noticed two or three people at table, found a vacant chair just opposite to Margaret, and seeing a new and beautiful face, glared at her over his soup-plate without remorse.

Certainly there was a great contrast between the two brothers. Whereas Hubert endeavoured, for no earthly motive, to efface all traces of his profession from his dress and language, George Gage, with as little show of reason, seemed never for a moment to forget his calling.

He stalked about as if the world was made for his sole benefit and pleasure, and contrived to make such a great jingling when

he walked, that Margaret seriously thought, the first time she heard him cross the marble hall, that a dray-horse had broken loose and was making his way to the drawing-room. This was the more strange as he did not dress in chain armour, but in a costume, something between a farmer and a baker's apprentice. He flourished his walking-stick as if he were leading a charge of cavalry; or held it in the pocket of his coat, which seemed an equally odd way of disposing of it. He was very arrogant in his manner to every body, except the few ladies who were deemed by him of sufficient birth and beauty to be honoured by his notice, and to them his manner assumed a softness and an assiduity which rather puzzled Margaret, who was edified by his laconic replies to the country gentlemen, and his haughty mode of speaking to the servants. But, as she was one of the chosen few to whom he condescended, she at least had no reason to complain.

He was attached to his father; though,

(and this was a heavy objection,) he did not like the fashion of his cravats, and respected him too, without being quite satisfied with his choice of a boot-maker. This was an instance of filial virtue which would hardly have been believed by his companions, but which was true notwithstanding.

These several traits, however, did not flash upon Margaret all at once, but became evident in the course of her acquaintance with him. At present she was merely aware that his great blue eyes were perusing her with an expression to which she was not accustomed, and to which no modest woman can ever become accustomed—the critical and scrutinising expression of a Turk in a Slave Market.

It was a relief to her to turn to Mr. Haveloc, who was rendering her the common courtesies of the table, with an earnestness which formed a sufficient contrast to the laughing manner of Hubert Gage. It seemed almost as if meeting at a strange house put them more at ease with each other.

"You remain here some days, do y not?" asked Mr. Haveloc.

"Yes, until after the races and the ba and the early flower show at S——."

"You mean to see a great deal of t world then before you come back to As dale."

"Yes," said Margaret, "I shall have much to tell my uncle about."

Mr. Haveloc gave her one of the softened smiles, which changed so entire the expression of his features.

"You look forward with pleasure," said, "to giving Mr. Grey an account your adventures."

"I do indeed," said Margaret.

"And so do I."

"You, Mr. Haveloc!"

"Yes, I shall come in for the narrati Perhaps you do not know that I shall retu to Ashdale before you do."

"Yes, my uncle told me so," said Ma garet, with something like a sigh.

Now, nothing in general so much offen

a man as not appearing extremely delighted with his society; but Mr. Haveloc, perhaps from the novelty of the thing, seemed rather pleased than otherwise.

"You don't look so glad as you ought," he said, with a smile, "which is rather ungrateful on your part; for to me Ashdale would lose very much of its attraction if you were absent."

It was enough to make her blush, such a marked compliment, and from such a person; and, to heighten her confusion, there was George Gage still staring at her on the other side of the table, as only a military man can stare.

"I suppose," said Mr. Haveloc, "the truth is, that you think you cannot tell Mr. Grey your little secrets when I am present; that is why you wish me away."

Margaret had not said she wished him away, but she did not contradict him.

"Of course I should not tell my uncle many things before you," she said, "because little circumstances, which are new to

me and strange to him, now that he never goes out, would seem very trifling to a third person."

"Don't you know," said Mr. Haveloc, "that first impressions are always interesting? You must not therefore prevent my hearing yours."

Miss Gage was rising at this moment, and Margaret availed herself of the move to avoid giving a reply.

When the ladies returned to the drawing-room, they gathered round the fire, and began to discuss the amusements of the next day. Margaret, who was standing by Elizabeth Gage, looked earnestly in her face to see whether she could really enter into conversation of so trifling a nature as that which was going on among the ladies.

Yes,—Elizabeth patiently heard Miss Lawson Smith's complaints of her crape ball dress, which had not been trimmed with roses of the proper tint, and gave as much comfort as she could under the

circumstances; and she endeavoured to decide upon a bonnet for Miss Conway, when that young lady professed to be unable to bring the matter to a conclusion for herself.

"'Recollect, my dear Lucy," said she, "that if the Fates grant us a fine day to-morrow, it will be made up of a bright sun and a keen north wind; the only advantage of an airy toilet, is to make you look blue upon the course, and send you home with a severe cold."

The prospect of a cold did not seem to frighten Lucy, but she was keenly alive to the disadvantages of looking blue.

Harriet Conway looking up from the footstool upon which she was seated close to the fire, remarked that, "her costume gave her no sort of trouble, as she was to ride on horseback to the races."

Margaret looked at her with some surprise and no little envy, thinking what a bold, accomplished horsewoman she must be.

"How do you feel to-night, darling?" asked her mother.

"Oh! very comfortable," said Harriet, leaning her head on her mother's lap, as Lady Conway took the arm-chair beside her; "quite well as long as I have nothing to do that I don't like."

"How I wish that you could go to the ball to-morrow, dearest," said her mother.

"Thank you," said Harriet, "but that is one of the things I don't like; besides, after being on horseback all the morning, I shall be glad to go to bed as soon as I have seen you all off in your finery."

"Such a pity, so well as you dance the Mazourka," said Lucy Conway, "for one meets such nice people at this ball. I really think if you took proper care—"

"Oh! we will run no risks," said Lady Conway, anxiously, "you coughed at dinner, I observed."

"It was the pepper, *mamma mia*," said Harriet; "but I have no intention of going to the ball. Bessy! send me over

that pretty little thing by your side. I have a mind to talk to her."

"What say you," asked Elizabeth smiling, "will you venture?"

Margaret complied with a little timidity in her manner.

"Why, you don't mean to say you are afraid of me," said Harriet taking Margaret's hand in her long, slender fingers, "I would excuse you, if I were a man. Well now, are you fond of riding?"

"I am just going to learn," said Margaret "it is the thing of all others I wish for."

"You ought to have begun younger," said Harriet, "but we will see what we can make of you. What is the colour of your riding-habit?"

"Blue," replied Margaret.

"True blue," said Harriet looking intently into the fire; "how do you like Hubert Gage?"

"I don't see how that follows," said Margaret smiling; "but I like him very well."

"Good," said Harriet; "I see it is not a tender subject. "You know the Gages are relations of ours. Are you not, Bessy?"

"Connexions, my dear Harriet; but I am quite ready to acknowledge the relationship."

"And is this your first ball?" said Harriet, turning again to Margaret.

"Yes."

"Don't you feel very nervous, and pleased, and frightened, and impatient?"

"Not very," said Margaret. "I wish very much to go, and I know Bessy and—and—two or three people."

"Are you engaged yet?"

"No. But if I do not dance, I shall be so amused with looking on, that it will be no disappointment to me."

"Very modest on your part; but I hear the gentlemen coming, so I must leave this charming footstool, or I shall be accused of fifty things. Here in this corner is room for two, so let us continue our conversation."

"Everything is so new to me," said Margaret, as she surveyed the room lit up with clusters of lamps, the heavy crimson curtains, the splendid gilt furniture, and the groups of gentlemen standing about the lady's chairs, drinking coffee, "this seems to me a very grand party; but perhaps it appears to you nothing."

"An ordinary dinner party," said Harriet; "perhaps they run rather large at this house. Uncle Gage, have you quite made up your book? Because I shall be happy to offer you odds upon Rory O'More."

Captain Gage who was passing with Sir Evan Conway, stopped short before the two girls.

"I will have nothing to do with you," he said to Harriet, "you are far too deep for me. I believe you are hand in glove with Lord Raymond's groom."

Sir Evan and Captain Gage both laughed very much at this charge.

Harriet with a deepened colour protested

against having ever seen the groom, or the horse.

Captain Gage turned to Margaret, and asked if she had been taking lessons in the science of book-making; adding, "that as she must be a novice as yet, he was willing to risk a pair of gloves with her."

Margaret said "she was not going to bet at all; that Bessy had advised her not."

"Bessy is a prude," said Captain Gage, looking much pleased, "you should never mind anything she says to you."

Margaret laughed, and shook her head, and the gentlemen passed on.

Then Hubert Gage made his way to the sofa, and began to rally Harriet and Margaret upon the retired spot they had chosen, admired Margaret's fan, and Harriet's gloves, and in fact went on as young men generally do when they wish to render themselves agreeable; in the midst of which discourse, Mr. Haveloc walked straight up to Margaret, and without any prologue, begged

to have the honour of dancing the first quadrille with her the next evening.

Margaret blushed and consented, and Mr. Haveloc bowed and walked away, while Hubert Gage drawing a chair close to the sofa, dropped into it and laughed immoderately.

"I never knew such a fellow," he exclaimed, "just at the moment that I was gaining courage to make such a request, he must needs step forwards and cut me out. It is too bad—don't you pity me? The second quadrille then, if you have any compassion."

"Mr. Hubert," said Blanche Somerton coming up, "we want your help so very much in this glee of Gödbe's. Will you take the tenor part?"

"Oh! if I am wanted," said Hubert, rising. "Miss Capel, I do not mean to stir without your answer."

"The second quadrille?" said Margaret.

"Exactly; unless you prefer the first Mazourka."

"Oh! but you do not know the Mazourka."

"No; but you can teach me so nicely in the morning."

"I will not undertake you," said Margaret laughing.

"Then I fall back upon the quadrille. Miss Somerton I am at your service."

Mr. George Gage now loitered up the room very slowly, and planted himself against the wall, close to Margaret. He first took her cup out of her hand and set it down, and then after a very careful survey of her from head to foot, he "hoped he should be so fortunate as to secure her hand for the first waltz. He confessed that he never danced quadrilles."

Margaret hesitated; she did not at all like the prospect of such a partner, but as she had no wish to sit still thenceforward, she accepted.

Mr. Gage set down her embarrassment to his own infinite attractions, and was satisfied. He then made a few ordinary remarks

to her about the neighbourhood; but although he did not address a word to Harriet Conway, Margaret who was very quick-sighted, observed that they bestowed upon each other, from time to time, glances which seemed to express dislike, almost defiance. At length, after one of these singular looks, Harriet said, with her peculiarly clear intonation, "I do not offer you a seat, Mr. Gage."

"I should be sorry to disturb you," he replied coldly; and removed to a little distance as he spoke.

Margaret made up a little romance in her mind directly; in which Harriet figured as an obdurate lady, and Mr. Gage as a desponding lover. She had leisure for these fancies, for Harriet became silent, and George Gage, though standing near, did not renew his conversation. Some of the older people were playing at cards; Lucy Conway was at the harp, Hubert almost held prisoner by Blanche Somerton, and Elizabeth was moving about among the guests with

all the dignity and grace of a young Queen.

"My dear Harriet," said Lady Conway coming up to her, "it is very late, and you are looking fagged. Do recollect what is before you to-morrow; and slip out of the room without the ceremony of a good night."

"I cannot very well," replied Harriet, "for I must ring for a shawl. I dare not leave this hot room without one."

Margaret offered to fetch Miss Conway a shawl of her own.

"No, not for worlds you kind little creature," said Harriet laying her hand on Margaret's arm, "it will do me no harm in the world to sit quietly here until the good people choose to separate."

While this was going on, Mr. Gage went up to Elizabeth, and said something to her; she fetched a shawl from one of the sofas, and he crossed over to Miss Harriet, and begged to have the honour of putting it on.

Harriet opened wide her large transparent eyes, with the crimson spot deepening on her cheek; thanked him, regretted to have given him the trouble; and then wrapping the large Cachemere completely round her, walked out of the room. George Gage stood with folded arms looking after her for some moments, and then threw himself on the sofa by the side of Margaret. She was not disposed to be pleased with him; but she could not deny that his manner possessed a certain charm, when he chose to exert it. It was true that he said nothing either witty or profound, but his language was easy and well chosen; and the softness of his tone, together with the exceeding interest he pretended to feel for the replies of his companion, could scarcely fail of making a favourable impression. The great drawback to his demeanour, was his remorseless and unceasing stare. Sometimes Margaret thought that something must be the matter with her sleeve, sometimes that her hair was coming

unfastened at the back, sometimes she wondered what there was peculiar in her shoe, and again she supposed that the fashion of her bracelet was unusual. With this exception, he rendered himself an amusing companion, and if Margaret had been more conversant with military men, she would have been willing to allow that in tact and information, he was very superior to the average of those gentlemen, who to serve Her Majesty, and their own convenience, are content to wear a certain disguise for a given period of time.

The evening passed quickly enough. Some young ladies sang, some played. George Gage remained lounging on the sofa by her side. Hubert was in great request at the piano, for he sang very well, and read music easily at sight. Mr. Gage asked Margaret if she exhibited, as he called it—thanked Heaven, with praiseworthy fervour, that he was not guilty of such a failing himself, and advised her to let him drive her to the course in his phaeton the

next day. Margaret gave no definite answer to this proposal. The party was dispersing, and when she reached her room, she was so heartily tired, that she could do no more than return Elizabeth's embrace, and consign herself to the care of Miss Mason, who with all her dispatch, could hardly get her to bed before she was asleep.

CHAPTER X.

Faste to those looks are all my fancies tied,
Pleas'de with thy sweetness, angry with thy pride.

PEELE.

Ray.—Ay, 'tis an old saide saying, I have redde
In certaine bokes that love is like to smoke;
But I say rather it is liker fire,
Which kindleth after men have put it out;
Often upon a little breath of ayre.

ANON.

THE morning was, as Elizabeth had predicted, bright as a poet's dream, or a poet's waking; but a north wind swept the half-clothed boughs of the trees, and warned all discreet persons to protect themselves from the cold air. Horses and carriages were assembling in front of the house, and the guests were collecting by slow degrees in the drawing-room previous to starting.

Harriet Conway appeared in her habit, which very much became her slender figure. She threw her riding whip and gauntlets into her hat which stood in the window seat, looked round for Margaret, who had become quite a little pet of her's; drew her into the window, examined her dress and praised it; told her how she ought to wear her hair under a hat; looked at her rings and admired her hands, and asked her how it was arranged that she should go to the course. George Gage, who was standing near talking to Mr. Conway, turned round on hearing the question, and said that he hoped Miss Capel would not retract the permission she had almost given him to drive her thither; upon which Hubert announced his intention of calling out his brother, which made everybody laugh except Margaret who was sadly confused. She said in a low voice to Harriet that she heartily wished Bessy would take her, for of all things, she dreaded being driven by Mr. Gage.

"How's that?" asked Harriet suddenly, "are you afraid?"

"No," returned Margaret, "but I—he is quite a stranger to me."

"Do you mind me, then?" asked Harriet.

"No," said Margaret laughing.

"Good," said Harriet, putting on her hat and gloves, "come, we are all ready, and I know Uncle Gage is impatient to be off. I'll manage it.

They stood on the steps while some of the elder persons of the party went off; and when George Gage's carriage drew up, Harriet came forward.

"I will drive Miss Capel, Mr. Gage;" she said, "for she has not a great deal of courage, and I shall be less likely than you to put it to the test."

"Surely not—surely you are not afraid of my driving;" said Mr. Gage, bending down to the level of Margaret's bonnet. "I had promised myself so great a pleasure, and you cannot doubt my caution on such an occasion."

"'You are very good," said Margaret, "but really—those horses—"

"'Come, come!" said Harriet, "give me the reins, I shall not be trying to show off as you would. Do be good-natured George, and let me drive; you can easily find a horse."

While she spoke, Margaret was struck with the alteration in Mr. Gage's countenance. Her chance was quite over with him, poor little girl; though she was entirely ignorant of ever having had any. He looked delighted, handed in Harriet and Margaret with the greatest care, and stood on the step arranging everything for Harriet's convenience.

"'Why, I thought," he said, "you had given up all these bad habits. Will you like another pair of horses? You had better drive a four-in-hand, now you are about it."

"No," said Harriet, "I wish to go quietly for the sake of my little friend here; so let every one get out of my way, and

will you tell Charles to send my groom on with my horse?"

As she spoke, she touched the horses, and swept out of the gates. She was silent for a short time, and then said as with a sigh, as if to herself, "Bless me, I called him George."

"I am so much obliged to you," said Margaret after a pause, "now I shall quite enjoy this day's pleasure."

Harriet laughed, and drove on as fast as she could.

"So shall I," she said; "my horse will be as fresh as a lark when we get to the course; and these horses are worth driving. George—Mr. Gage, I mean, knows how to buy a horse."

"Suppose," said Margaret, "they were to run away."

"Then we should get to S—— all the faster," said Harriet.

"But you have not strength to stop them," said Margaret.

"Granted," said Harriet. "Here, will you take the reins for a moment?"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Margaret looking up into her companion's face.

"I know where George keeps his cigars. I am going to take one, that's all."

Margaret looked aghast.

"They are perfectly quiet, on my word," said Harriet. "Oh! about the smoking. Do you mind it then?"

"No," returned Margaret, who had never been in company with any one while smoking. "I'll take the reins; but pray be quick."

Harriet was quick; before Magaret had time to be frightened, she had lit a cigar, and resumed the reins with all the uncon-cern in the world.

"I learned this at Madrid," she said from between her teeth. "Some day, if you please me, I'll tell you my history."

"All of it?" asked Margaret, looking up into her companion's face.

"Oh, yes! no half measures," returned Harriet.

They went to S—— by a cross-country

road, and therefore fell in with very few of those who were likewise bound for the course. And by those few, Harriet, with her hat and habit, her short hair and cigar, was supposed as she whirled past them, to be a handsome boy.

Mr. Gage was already on the course with his party; he rode up with his brother and Mr. Haveloc to escort the ladies to the stand. Harriet had her horse brought up to the steps of the carriage, mounted at once, and rode off with Mr. Conway; and Hubert insisted on conducting Margaret to Elizabeth pleading his sister's commands to that effect.

And now they were seated in the very front of the stand, Elizabeth and Margaret together; the gentlemen of their party were dispersed about the course, and Margaret could distinguish in the distance the slight figure of Harriet Conway, guiding her spirited horse among the company, followed by her father and brother. She soon, however, lost sight of her in the crowd, and began to feel impatient for the first race to begin.

Now, their places being very good, attracted the envy of a couple of insolent dragoon officers, who had just arrived, and who tried by pushing in a most unjustifiable manner, to edge themselves in. Elizabeth turned round in haughty surprise, Margaret in childish wonder, and presented to the eyes of the eager officers, two of the loveliest faces on the race course.

"Oh!" said one of these cavaliers to the other, drawing back with a very blank and crest-fallen face, "Oh! I didn't know they were young uns!"

Margaret could hardly restrain her laughter at this audible ejaculation. Miss Gage contented herself by thanking Heaven with a curved lip, that they were soldiers.

"No sailor," she said to Margaret, "would ever annoy a woman, young or old. I am glad they were rude, these dragoons!"

The contempt with which this last word was pronounced, all the keener for its calmness, can scarcely be imagined.

"But I ought to apologise to you, dear," she continued; "though to suppose that your brave father had the most distant affinity to these popinjays, would be indeed too insulting."

Presently the race began, and Margaret forgot all about the rudeness of the officers in the interest of the scene.

After the race, they were joined by some of the gentlemen of their party. George Gage came up to his sister and leaned against the railing by her side, in that frame of mind so common to English people, which is called an ill-humour.

"Have you lost, George?" asked Elizabeth.

"No. I have no inducement to bet here," said Mr. Gage; "a miserable counterfeit of a race like this. I keep my losses for Epsom."

"And whereabouts is Harriet?"

"On the other side of the course with Charles Conway, and Lord Raymond. I congratulate her very much upon her choice.

The fellow seems to have been born and bred in a stable."

"I hardly know him," said Elizabeth; "but I am afraid Harriet will be very tired, riding about so long, I wish she could be persuaded to sit quietly here until we go home."

"I will try if you wish it," said Mr. Gage, "but it can hardly be expected that she should leave so great an attraction as Lord Raymond."

"Go," said Elizabeth laughing, "I don't imagine his Lordship to be so irresistible."

As Mr. Gage was leaving the stand, he encountered the two officers before mentioned, who had crept to some distance from the ladies. One of these worthies had only lately exchanged from Mr. Gage's regiment into the one he now adorned, and he presented his companion to George.

There was some bowing, and lifting of hats and shaking of hands, and then George invited them to dine at his father's before

the ball, and join their party thither, to which they readily agreed.

His mission proved successful. In a few minutes Harriet came in followed by her brother and Lord Raymond.

Margaret was very curious to see this nobleman; and although she had thought Mr. Gage's remark very harsh, she was not much surprised at it when he made his appearance. He was ill-dressed, not very young, clumsy in his person, and heavy in the expression of his features. He stammered a good deal, and was not happy in his conversational powers. His ideas were rather slow of circulation. He had got it into his head that it was the duty of an Englishman to cultivate racing; and it would have taken more years than he was likely to live, to convince him that it was a pernicious and disgraceful occupation. He was very much on the turf, but he was just skilful and cautious enough neither to gain or loose much in a year by the vice. At the present moment, Harriet was the object

of his attention, and he therefore talked of nothing else.

One of the party congratulated him upon his horse, which had just won the race.

"'Yes," he said, "he was glad of it; for Miss Conway had betted upon Rory O'More."

Miss Gage asked him "if he had any other horse running that day?"

"'No," he replied, "as he should leave the course presently. How was Miss Conway going home?"

Lady Conway remarked to him, "that it was a cold day."

"'It was, indeed," he said, "he did not think Miss Conway seemed to be sufficiently wrapped up."

Harriet replied to both his remarks at once. "She said, that she meant to drive herself home, and that she was quite warm enough."

And by this time, the races being over for the day, and the company beginning to

disperse, Harriet called to Margaret, and sent her brother to look for the carriage Margaret was not sorry to be gone; she had a head-ache, which had been gradually growing worse, and she hoped that the fresh air would blow it away. Harriet lit another cigar as they went off the course she asked Margaret again "if she objected to it?" and again Margaret said "No;' for though she thought it a very odd fancy in her companion, she did not find the smell disagreeable enough to oppose it. But her head became worse, and when she reached home, she was scarcely able to dress for dinner. She made an effort, however, and went down stairs. There were no candles in the drawing-room, which was dimly lighted by a very moderate fire.

Margaret felt chilly, and took a chair as close as she could to the fire-place, next to a person who seemed to be in a uniform, as far as she could tell by the glimmering light. He entered into general conversation with her, and amongother desultoryremarks

asked her "if she meant to accompany her daughter to the ball that evening?"

Margaret ascribed the mistake to the darkness, and contented herself with replying in the negative.

The stranger was directed to take her into the dining-room, and as they came into a blaze of light on crossing the hall, he discovered that the lady he had the honour of escorting was young and beautiful; for he had mistaken her for Mrs. Somerton, who was about Margaret's height.

As soon as his ideas became enlightened on this subject, he began to stammer out a few of those incoherent sentences with which young men of no education are apt to try to express their meaning.

"Upon my word—I—it is very strange now—I have a thousand apologies to—the most singular—I actually thought you—"

"Yes," said Margaret quietly, in one moment recognizing her friend of the race course, "it is not the first time to-day you have thought I was not a 'young un.'"

It would have done any artist good to have seen the officer's face. His line was a bad one, but he was not first rate in his line—not a Lovelace, or a Pelham. He had not learned to be found out with a good grace. Like Fag, it hurt his conscience. He changed colour, and looked a good deal smaller than usual. Of course the first thing he did was to tell a lie. He hoped he had not pushed against her in the stand—some people behind, had been pressing upon him so scandalously, that he almost feared he had inconvenienced some ladies in the front of the stand; he hoped it had not been the case.

Margaret, rather amused at the way in which he got through the difficulty, made some slight reply, and took her place at the table. By some accident she was separated from the hero of the race course, and found herself between Mr. Haveloc, and Hubert Gage. Harriet Conway, still in her riding habit, sat on the other side of the said hero.

"Hubert, cannot you save Margaret the trouble of carving that dish, whatever it is?" said Harriet, seeing that Margaret looked embarrassed at the task.

"I could, but I do not wish it," said Hubert. "It is so very becoming," he added in a low voice to Margaret, "ladies with such beautiful arms should always carve."

"I wish you would help me, instead of talking nonsense," said Margaret, who was colouring very much under the impression that two or three persons had their eyes fixed on her, "you see how disagreeable it is to me."

Before she had done speaking, Mr. Haveloc had taken the knife and fork from her hands.

"That's right," said Harriet, speaking across to Mr. Haveloc.

"I do wish you would go to the ball, Harriet," said Hubert.

"Don't you really go the ball?" echoed Mr. Elliot, the hero before mentioned, "how

can you be so cruel as to remain at home?"

"Yes—you wish to dance with me, don't you?" said Harriet, turning suddenly round upon him. "I'll tell you why I don't go. I detest dancing; unless one could hire a partner as they do in Flanders, and the man felt his value to be one kreutzer, and no more." A good many men can get on very well with people who are exactly like every body they are in the habit of meeting, but any thing like a character puts them quite out. So Mr. Elliot got up a little laugh and was silent. At last, he enquired of Harriet what amusement she preferred to dancing.

"Pistol shooting," said Harriet. "There's the man with the champagne. Don't you take any?"

"You take no wine?" said Mr. Elliot.

"No—I never do," returned Harriet.

"And what can you hit with the pistol?"

"A wine-glass at sixteen paces."

"How often?"

"Sometimes. What can you hit?"

"A—why—a—"

"A hay-stack, I suppose. Tell somebody to bring me the cream."

"Have you heard Fornasari?" asked Mr. Elliot.

"No. What is he like?"

"Oh, very fine really! You would be delighted!"

"What is fine?" asked Harriet impatiently. "I want to know the sort of singer; and you call him fine!"

Mr. Elliot never having heard of a definition, was naturally silent under this attack.

"Have you been to town lately?" asked Harriet.

"Yes. I am only just returned."

"Have you seen the new marbles then?"

"The—I beg your pardon."

"The marble from Xanthis in the British Museum?"

"I don't quite—I believe they took me

once to the Museum when I was a boy in the Christmas holidays, along with the pantomimes."

"Ah! it is not now in the same place with the pantomimes; we have changed all that," said Harriet. "I say, Hubert, my Skye terrier caught a rat yesterday out walking."

"No, did he? I wish I had been there," said Hubert, "Why did not you let me walk with you?"

"It was before you came home. Don't you know you were only just in time for dinner."

"So I was. What did you win of me, Miss Capel?"

"Nothing," said Margaret, "I would not bet at all."

"I was so sorry for your determination," said George Gage, across the table to Margaret, "it would have been such a pleasure to lose to you."

And upon this gallant speech, he and Harriet exchanged one of their singular glances.

"You did not care which horse won, did you?" asked Hubert.

"Yes, I did," said Margaret, "but I knew that one would not win."

"Which was it?"

"Hyacinth. It was such a pretty name."

"And how did you contrive to form so correct an estimate of Hyacinth's merits?" asked George Gage.

"Oh! I knew nothing about it," said Margaret. "Harriet told me."

"Miss Conway has the advantage of a friend behind the scenes," said George coolly; and then another glance flashed across the table from Harriet's splendid eyes.

Mr. Elliot mentioned the name of the person to whom Hyacinth belonged—made some remark upon the fore-foot of the animal, and then was silent; naturally thinking that he had instructed the company enough for one while.

When Margaret returned to the drawing-room, she found her head so very much

worse, that she was obliged to tell Elizabeth, in confidence, that she did not think she would be able to go to the ball.

She said this with her eyes full of tears; partly on account of the delicate white crape dress, which was laid out in her room with its pretty garniture of lilac primroses.

Elizabeth was all kindness. She would not hear of her giving up the ball, but took her into her own sitting-room, and tried every remedy that her ingenuity could suggest. At last, while bathing her forehead with eau de Cologne, she exclaimed, "My dear child, I hope that foolish Harriet has not been persuading you to smoke."

"No, indeed!" said Margaret earnestly, "but it was the horrid scent of those cigars. I had no head-ache before."

"How vexatious!" exclaimed Miss Gage. "I must read her a lecture upon it. But if you keep very quiet until we set off, my dear Margaret, you may be able to go. I cannot endure that you should be disappointed. Indeed, two or three people,"

said she smiling, "will endure it as ill as myself."

Margaret blushed, and wondered to herself who Elizabeth could mean; but she was suffering too much to make the attempt. She was too giddy to stand, too ill to think of undergoing another toilet, or to be able to sit up all night afterwards. She made the best of it, however; said the pleasure was only postponed; tried not to think of her lilac primroses, and laughed at Harriet who was really distressed, when she learned that she had caused her little friend's illness.

Hubert Gage was very much discomposed. He was quite certain that Margaret had not tried the proper remedies, and that if he could see her, he would set every thing to rights in a moment. She ought to have brandy—but ladies never knew what was good for them. His complaints were disregarded however; so he turned away and asked Blanche Somerton to dance with him.

Mr. Haveloc looked annoyed, " regretted exceedingly to hear that Miss Capel was suffering," and went to learn the particulars of Miss Gage.

George seemed the most vexed of the party; for he naturally thought it was very wrong that every thing should not happen just as he liked, and he had wished to waltz with Margaret.

He therefore said, " that for his part he did not think he should go to the ball that evening. He was not fond of dancing, and he really did think somebody ought to be at home, in case of Miss Capel becoming worse.

At this considerate announcement, Harriet drew up her handsome mouth as if she was going to whistle, and then coming forward, said, " I stay at home, Mr. Gage, and I imagine that I shall be very well able to take care of Miss Capel. Therefore you had better go and make yourself decent, and accompany your friends to the ball."

This remark, which seemed to convey an opinion by no means flattering to Mr. Gage's costume, appeared rather to amuse him.

He said, that he did not know Miss Conway was such a judge of dress; and asked her if she could recommend him a model.

Captain Gage, hearing his son's declaration that he would stay at home, now came up in a great bustle. He had no idea of not taking with him both his handsome sons, as well as his daughter. He was very proud of his children, and pleased himself in the thought that they would excite great attention in the ball-room.

"No, my dear boy, you can't stay at home. Impossible!" he said. "We would all stay at home if we could do the poor thing any good. But here you would be only in the way. Would he not, Harriet?"

"Decidedly." said Harriet, with one of her flashing looks.

Mr. Gage bit his lip, and turned to leave the room.

"There, go and make yourself decent," said Captain Gage, echoing Harriet's words. "Upon my honour, I am very sorry for the poor little girl. Her first ball too!"

CHAPTER XI.

Aos homens todos
Lhes deu um livro so' a natureza,
O proprio coração.

CATÂO.

Nature hath given to all men one same book,
'Tis their own heart.

E se voi stanchi fossi d' ascoltare
Si vi potrete riposar in tanto.

ZINABI.

"I don't know when I have been so vexed," said Harriet, who was sitting with Margaret, while the ladies went up to dress. "I'm sure you will never be friends with me after this contretemps."

"Indeed I shall," said Margaret. "You could not help it, I know; and it is no such great misfortune after all."

Harriet drew the fire together, rang for

coffee, and pushed over a footstool to Margaret.

"We will try to make ourselves comfortable," said she. "I have told the women to come in and show you their dresses before they start. Then you shall have some strong coffee, and then to bed."

"I wish," said Margaret hesitating, "I wish you would tell me your history, as you promised."

"That is very sly," said Harriet laughing, "because I cannot refuse you anything under the circumstances. But I will do it, and the more readily, as I have not much to tell, so drink your coffee, and listen." Once upon a time—"

"Oh, but a real history if you please!" said Margaret.

"This is real," said Harriet, laughing. —"Must I not begin at the beginning? Well, if you like it, *tout court*. I am the youngest of the family. Mamma doats on me—Papa likes me very well. Charles, the one you have seen, is the eldest—he

wears his glass in his eye—I do not think he has any other peculiarity. Then comes Lucy, she is a good girl, and I am very fond of her. I could tell you a secret that would a little surprise you; that is, if you have observed any of the bye-play of the last day or two."

"Oh, do!" said Margaret. "I really will keep it."

"I believe you!" said Harriet. "It shall come in due course. My second brother, Evan, is just called to the bar. He has a good deal of character, and is therefore my favourite. I should rather like you to see Evan. Alfred, the youngest son, is in the army; and there is the outline of a Baronet's family."

"It is very amusing," said Margaret. "I like better to hear real stories than to read them."

"For me," said Harriet. "I was very sickly as a child, and I spent most of my time with an uncle, who is very fond of me, and who lives in a romantic part of the

country, and keeps up an old manor-hou in the old English style. My uncle a aunt Singleton are both characters—bu can't stay to describe all my relations."

"Oh do! I like descriptions," s Margaret.

"Well. Aunt Singleton is the quietest tle dormouse that ever was seen. She cre about the house in her black silk gown, as deaf as a post, and speaks in a whisp My uncle is a keen sportsman; he tau me to ride, and drive, and angle; and es blished my health, without improving manners. He is very proud of me, beca he has made me what I am. People thi I am trying to imitate Die Vernon, wh I am merely following the pursuits natu to such a course of education."

"And how did you learn your lessons the while?" asked Margaret.

"Never learned any;" replied Harri "I picked up French from a lady's-ma Italian, from a music master, who co not speak English; and Spanish, when

father was Envoy at Madrid. I can speak and write these languages almost as well as my own; and this with a good deal of desultory reading, is the sum total of my education. I don't even know the multiplication table!

Margaret laughed,

"You saw Lord Raymond on the course to day."

"Yes," replied Margaret.

"He used often to pay my uncle a visit, and he always took the notice of me that men are apt to take of children. I used to ride with him and my uncle. I was very fond of horses and dogs, and enjoyed field sports as much as he did. Every visit he paid, Lord Raymond asked me if I would be his little wife; and I as regularly said, 'no, thank you.' I always thought he was unable to leave off any habit. He has just left off this one though."

"Has he?" said Margaret inquiringly.

"You shall hear. Well, when I was about seventeen, George Gage came to see

my uncle. We took a vast fancy to each other; that is, after our fashion:—we were neither of us in the Romeo and Juliet school. Fools—as you can imagine."

Margaret's interest became very deep at this crisis.

Harriet threw her curls off her forehead, and went on.

"He admired my riding and my eyes, and, in fact, every thing I said and did. My uncle was contented; Captain Gage was pleased; we were said to be too young, and the affair was put off for a year or two. Never do that, by the way, if you care about the man. I like to mix a little useful advice with my tale, you observe."

"Why, I think," said Margaret, "that if his love would not last any time, it had better go before than after marriage."

"I thought," said Harriet, "that he had enough love to last to all eternity; but I was mistaken. And if he thought the same of me, he was mistaken too."

At these words she drew herself up

proudly, and again scattered her short curls.

"He went off to his regiment; and the next thing I heard of him was that he was at the feet of a married woman—a lady famous for detaching men from their lawful allegiance, whether as husbands or lovers. This Mrs. Max—but we will not mention names."

"Mrs. Maxwell Dorset!" exclaimed Margaret starting up in her chair.

"What, you have heard of her?" said Harriet, "I believe she enjoys a pretty extensive reputation. Is your head worse? I have been talking too much for you, I am afraid."

"Not at all," said Margaret, leaning back again, "pray go on; and will you give me another cup of coffee?"

"You shall have it," said Harriet, "one need not forget to eat and drink; that is the last stage of that most deplorable folly—love. Well—I do not look like a person who would put up with such conduct, do I?"

"No," said Margaret smiling.

"I wrote immediately to George to signify that as he had made his choice, he might abide by it—that he was welcome to be Mrs. such a one's slave, but that I resigned every sort of claim to the honour. I thought he deserved a little better than Lazarillo de Tormes, who played the part of lackey to seven mistresses—the rascal—and at last was almost demolished by two viragos who contended for his services in the open street."

She laughed scornfully, and went on.

"This made rather a cabal in the family, you may suppose. Papa, who thought one daughter was disposed of, looked very blank upon my proceedings. Captain Gage—just like him—took my part. He said that George had behaved shamefully, and though he hoped it would all come right again, he could not wonder at my determination. But these things never do come right again, Margaret."

Margaret sighed.

"The strangest part of the whole affair wa

George's conduct. He had been, before this transaction, not at all better than his neighbours—and that is saying little enough for any man—indeed, as my good aunt told me, I might reasonably have expected what happened. My aunt was right, though I own, I could have called her out at the time for saying so. Well, he suddenly turned over a new leaf; renounced his extravagances, cut Mrs Maxwell Dorset, and became quite a moral character. In fact, behaved as people are supposed to do upon an engagement instead of a repulse. This was all his pride; just to show me what an exemplary character I had thrown away."

"And you," said Margaret, "how did you bear it?"

"Very coolly, I promise you;" said Harriet, "I grew thin, and irritable, and so yellow that I was afraid to look at my own face in the glass. Aunt Singleton plagued me with asses milk. Uncle Singleton gave me a capital hunter. I don't know which

remedy it was, but I very soon forgot all about Master George."

Margaret did not quite believe this, but she made no remark.

"Still," continued Harriet, "I was very glad when papa was appointed Envoy to Madrid. I insisted on going with him, and enjoyed our residence in Spain beyond all description. Just before we set out, Lord Raymond asked me again to be his little wife. I was not exactly in the frame of mind to feel pleased with his politeness; so I told him, that I was tired of having to answer the same idle question, and so took leave of him in a pet.

"We were two years at Madrid; when we came back, the first person I saw was Lord Raymond. I was afraid he was going to bore me again. Not at all. He took the first opportunity to tell me that Lucy had been more complaisant than I had; that they were engaged, but wished to keep it a profound secret for the present, while his pecuniary affairs are undergoing certain

regulations. But that dog in the manger, George, thinks that Lord Raymond's attentions are directed to me; and cannot contain his malice on the subject, although it is certainly no concern of his."

"I do not wonder he thinks so," said Margaret, "I am sure I did."

"Yes! because poor Lord Raymond cannot pay Lucy the attention he would wish to do," said Harriet, "and because from habit, he has always been used to consider me as somebody that he ought to follow about, and make a fuss with; and as he is really kind-hearted, he fidgets about me ten times more, now that I have been very ill."

"'And about your illness," said Margaret.

"'Nothing romantic, I can assure you," said Harriet. "I went to see my Uncle Singleton on my return, and one day, having paid a visit to the wife of one of his park-keepers, a young woman who had formerly been my maid, and who was then ill, I had

the bad luck to catch her complaint, which was typhus fever. You cannot imagine a greater bore; and I have lost all my hair you see, I have had both disorders, and I pronounce typhus fever to be considerably worse than the tender passion. I hope you may have neither. It is the best wish I can frame for you."

"Thank you for your wish and your story," said Margaret, "it is really a romance."

"That is the worst of it," said Harriet, "I am twenty, and I have already lived a whole life; there is no more excitement for me. I shall marry a country curate, and teach at Sunday schools, I think."

"What a great deal of romance there is in the world," said Margaret.

"True," said Harriet, "some writer says, 'that everybody's heart would be a romance if it were accurately delineated;' not everybody's, though!" she exclaimed with a peal of laughter, "that man who set next me at dinner. What was his name?"

"Mr. Elliot," said Margaret, beginning to laugh in her turn.

"Aye, Mr. Elliot—fancy his heart!" exclaimed Harriet, bursting into fresh peals of laughter, "the keenest pang he could feel would be hunger; his most exquisite enjoyment a pocket-full of money. No, cry you mercy—there must be some exceptions to the poet's rule."

"On my word, you two seem to be very merry," said Miss Gage, coming in, "I hope not more merry than wise. How is all this to agree with your head, my dear Margaret?"

"Oh, I have been so amused," said Margaret, taking Miss Gage's hand, "that I have forgotten the pain. How beautiful you look, Bessy."

"Yes," said Harriet looking attentively at her, "that white gauze with corn-flowers, has a very tolerable effect. How well they look on your light hair; commend me to such a high tiara of flowers. It gives you the aspect of an empress."

Miss Gage laughed; and Harriet calling in the other ladies, commented upon them with as much indifference as if they had been a set of wax figures.

"There," said she, "what do you say to Lucy? Do you like pink crape, little one? It is very well made; but I prefer white for candlelight. Well, that is the most knowing little cap I have seen a long time, look Margaret; it is made of gold twist. Bravo! Miss Lawson Smith. That is an Indian fan, I suppose, Miss Selwyn. After all, I think Miss Somerton has the prettiest dress; those little bouquets are placed to a wish. Eh, Margaret!"

"They are all charmingly dressed," said Margaret, "pray, dear Bessy, remember to tell me all about it."

"I will, indeed," said Elizabeth, "I will try and recollect everybody's partners; and the different ices at supper. Those are the two leading features of a ball."

"Shall you dance the Mazourka, Bessy?" asked Margaret.

"I—no; I dance very little," said Elizabeth, "a quadrille or two, just for form's sake."

"She stands talking to her father," said Harriet, as soon as the ladies had withdrawn, "that is the way she spends the best part of the evening. I often wonder how Bessy can manage to keep single. She is so very much admired."

"How is it then?" asked Margaret.

"I suppose her father makes her fastidious," said Harriet, "indeed, I do not suppose she would easily find such a person as Captain Gage. I know two people now who would be very happy to die for her."

Margaret opened her eyes.

"Young Haveloc has been talked of for her; because they live in the same county," said Harriet; "but any child can see there is nothing in that quarter. By the way, he is very intimate with my brother Evan."

"Indeed," said Margaret.

"Well, good night, my poor little

martyr," said Harriet; "I am heartily sorry for you, because, until you have tried, you cannot possibly know what a very stupid affair a ball is."

Margaret returned her farewell, and went to bed, her head full of races, Mr. Gage, Mrs. Maxwell Dorset, her white crape gown, and Bessy's wreath of corn-flowers.

CHAPTER XII.

Her whyles Sir Calidore there vowed well,
And markt her rare demeanure, which him seemed
So farre the meane of shepheards to excell,
As that he in his mind her worthy deemed
To be a prince's paragone esteemed.

SPENSER.

MARGARET breakfasted with Miss Gage in her dressing-room the next morning, and heard all the particulars that she wished to know respecting the ball. She went down stairs about the middle of the day, and the first person she saw was Harriet Conway standing on the lawn outside the drawing-room windows, talking to Lord Raymond, while Hubert Gage and Mr. Conway were teazing her Skye terrier

at a little distance. As soon as she caught sight of Margaret, she came to the window and greeted her.

"Quite well, really? That is right! No remains whatever of that unlucky head-ache? I hope devoutly the dog will bite you both!" she exclaimed, turning round to the gentlemen.

Hubert left the dog to its fate, and came up to condole with Margaret upon her disappointment of the last evening—his disappointment he ought to say; for he was sure that he had been the greatest sufferer on the occasion.

Margaret, knowing very well that he had been dancing, and enjoying himself all the evening, laughed, and said she was sorry for him.

Lord Raymond, who was just going off, took Harriet on one side, and seemed to be talking very earnestly to her. Mr. Conway joined Margaret at the window with the dog, and conversed with her in a very condescending manner; tried to persuade

her to think Donald a great beauty, and told her how much money the little beast was worth.

While they were thus employed, Mr. Gage came into the drawing-room, and advanced leisurely to Margaret. He immediately caught sight of Harriet and Lord Raymond; but he was far too experienced to suffer any vexation to be traced in his manner. He made the most anxious inquiries after Miss Capel's health; regretted very much the loss their party had sustained on the previous night; abused the ball as intolerably stupid; and tried to persuade Margaret to allow him to drive her out after luncheon. He hoped now that she had seen how quiet his horses were, she would feel disposed to trust herself with him. He trusted that Miss Harriet Conway had inspired Miss Capel with a little of her courage.

Harriet, hearing her own name, turned round, and seeing George Gage, coloured, waved her hand to him by way of "good

morning," and then renewed her conversation with Lord Raymond. His Lordship did not speak very fast; and like many people, the more he made up his mind to go, the farther he was from going. He had to say a great many things which he was very earnest in delivering, and which made Harriet laugh very much; and the bystanders would hardly have imagined that the substance of his narrative was the history of some tulip roots which his sister had paid a great deal of money for, and which, owing to some carelessness on her part, had never blossomed at all.

Meantime, while Mr. Gage talked to Margaret of the flower-show, he was watching every movement and look of Harriet's; and his patience was going by inches, while he appeared much interested in moss roses and Neapolitan violets. At last he said to Mr. Conway in a remarkably calm manner, that considering his sister was an invalid, it occurred to him that it was hardly prudent to stand out in a high wind without a shawl.

Mr. Conway laughed, said it was true enough; but that Harriet had a will of her own, and would not thank him if he interrupted her conversation for the minor consideration of a bonnet and cloak.

"What is that you say of me?" asked Harriet, running up to the window, having just parted from Lord Raymond. "Here, Hubert, stand out of the way, you are such giants, you Gage's. Give me my dog, Charles. Now, Margaret, if you wish to see a beauty—but what were you saying of me?"

"Merely remarking that it would have been unpardonable to break in upon your tête-à-tête to save you from the chance of another illness. I ventured to think that you were slightly clad for so cold a wind," said Mr. Gage, drawing his chair to the fire, as if in proof of the inclement weather.

"People have no business to think at all upon my proceedings," said Harriet, carelessly, "Hubert! I wish you would go and get Donald a little bit of meat on a plate;

he ought to have his dinner about this time of day. My dog is not a dog in the manger," she added; drawing close to Margaret with Donald in her arms. "How frightened you look. He does not hear me."

"He will be worth nothing for sport if you nurse and pet him so," said her brother, "you had much better have a lap-dog."

"Now is not that quite a man's idea?" said Harriet laughing, "if you can make anything of use to you, well; but you have literally no notion of companionship. You judge everything by what it would fetch; and why you ever marry, I cannot think, unless you get some money by the bargain."

"Oh! that is too severe upon my word. Do not you think so?" said Hubert, turning to Margaret.

"I hope so," said Margaret, "but I have seen too little to judge."

"I cannot think that experience will ever make you judge hardly of others,"

said Mr. Gage in a soft voice to Margaret.

"Experience will tell her that to judge truly, is to judge hardly in five cases out of ten," said Harriet disdainfully.

"Luncheon is ready," exclaimed Hubert, taking Margaret's hand and hurrying her out of the room, "and a good thing too, for our discussion was growing rather stormy; and I have no objection to interrupt my courtier of a brother in his pretty speeches."

Margaret laughed as she took her seat at the table, and said she thought that pretty speeches ran in the family. She felt now perfectly at her ease with both brothers; feeling convinced that George was still attached to Harriet Conway, and that Hubert did not know what it was to be attached to any body.

"Oh, by the way!" said Hubert, as he drew a chair beside Margaret, "Haveloc would go off after breakfast. He made many inquiries about you, and was very sorry,

as everybody was, last night. Bread! to be sure, I beg you a thousand pardons. Now don't starve; it is dreadful to see women eat so little, it reminds me of that story,—did you ever read the Arabian Nights?"

"Often," said Margaret, "you mean the story of the Ghoul. I do not mean to be a Ghoul to-day; you may give me some chicken."

"That's right," said Hubert. "Hallo! here is the Governor with that old wretch, Casement. How I wish Haveloc was here; he hates the old fellow so cordially. Don't you?"

"I am glad he is away," said Margaret, "for they always quarrel."

"You are an angel of peace," exclaimed Hubert, gazing at her with admiration.

"Pray don't be sentimental at luncheon," said Margaret, laughing, "it is so very inappropriate."

Captain Gage and Mr. Casement now came up to the table. Captain Gage took

a vacant chair on the other side of Margaret; shook hands, and said a great many kind things to her on her loss of the ball; hoped it would not be long before there was another in the neighbourhood; wondered what people were about that they did not give as many dances as they used to do, and insisted on her drinking a glass of wine. Mr. Casement stopped short, and taking out his glasses, surveyed everybody at table with much deliberation; and odious as he was, there was something in his manner which showed that he had been used to a great deal of society, and that he held himself on a level with everybody he met.

"Hallo!" said he, "you have got a party together. How do you manage to keep them out of mischief; eh, Captain? There is something going on at your elbow there, as I'm alive. Eh, little woman! Shall I go home and tell uncle?"

Margaret coloured deeply. Miss Gage shook her head at Mr. Casement.

"Miss Gage, your most devoted," said

he, bowing to her. "No, I never touch anything at this time of day—well, for once, give me a bit of tongue, little woman. Thank you, Master Hubert."

And not being able to express himself fully, under the kind but commanding eye of Miss Gage, he was obliged to content himself by making a face at Hubert and Margaret, which was intended to speak the contents of a whole valentine.

"And who is that curly-headed thing yonder?" said Mr. Casement pointing with his glasses to Harriet.

"My niece, Harriet," said Captain Gage, who was so used to hear Harriet call him uncle, that he forgot at the moment that their relationship was rather more distant.

"Niece—by Adam's side," said Mr. Casement. "Eh, Captain Gage! it looks rather suspicious when gentlemen call ladies their nieces—ha! ha!"

"Sir!" said George Gage, staring in his most arrogant manner at Mr. Casement.

"Eh! you there Master George?" said

Mr. Casement. "I thought you could not get leave; really, when one considers what a farce the service is now-a-days, one is puzzled to know why you should not get leave, as you call it, every mother's son of you at once. What are you doing over in Ireland?"

George Gage seemed very little disposed to give Mr. Casement an answer; but after staring at him haughtily for a moment, he replied "Nothing." And then turning to his sister, he asked her some questions about her plans for the afternoon.

"Do you know, Uncle Gage," said Harrier, "that I am going to stay here a whole week longer?"

"The longer the better," said Captain Gage. "I wish you were all going to stay. The house will seem deserted when you are gone."

Lady Conway made some polite reply to this speech, and thanked Miss Gage for taking charge of Harriet, "for she knew they were to have a very gay week at

Wardenscourt, and it was important that Harriet should be quiet."

George Gage on hearing this announcement, directed his merciless stare to Harriet in some surprise; for Wardenscourt was Lord Raymond's place, and it seemed but natural that she should have made an effort to go there.

Harriet cared nothing for his gaze; she was used to be looked at, and she did not even seem to perceive that his eyes were upon her; she kept her eyes on her plate, and a suppressed smile played for an instant on her cheek, as she said, "Ah! Wardenscourt; they are sure to be really gay there. It is the only house almost—but I shall have the pleasure of being with you Bessy."

"Wardenscourt is not far off, fortunately," said George.

Harriet looked up, still smiling.

"No," she said. "I hope Lord Raymond will come over one morning to tell me about the pointers his keeper is training for Uncle

Singleton. Take care that you remind him, Lucy."

Lucy laughed and coloured. Margaret felt very much inclined to laugh too.

" It will be worth while for him to come over," said George, " if he occupies you as profitably as he did this morning."

" How was that, Mr. Gage?" asked Lady Conway.

" The fact is this, mamma," said Harriet hastily, " Mr. Gage having forgotten my out of door propensities, was astonished to see me standing on the lawn for a few minutes without my bonnet."

" Oh! pray be careful while we are away, my dear," said Lady Conway. " You must not take cold."

They were rising. Mr. Gage drew back Harriet's chair; and she, in passing out, fixed her splendid eyes upon him, and muttered in a distinct manner, ' Tu me lo pagherai.' "

He bowed as if to say, he was willing to make payment at any time.

The ladies remained loitering among the beautiful plants in the hall, and Elizabeth coming up to Margaret, urged her, in a low voice, to stay with her as long as Harriet remained at Chirke Weston.

"It will be more cheerful for both of you, and though I do not propose her as a model for your imitation; you are safe with her, she always speaks the truth. And your uncle can better spare you now Mr. Haveloc is with him."

Margaret accepted with much pleasure, and the visitors having now all dropped off, she began really to enjoy herself. They walked out, accompanied by George and Hubert over a beautiful country.

Hubert divided his attentions very much between Margaret and the Skye terrier.

Harriet took her own course, swinging in her hand a little riding-whip which had a whistle at the end of it, with which she was used to summon her dog.

George walked with Elizabeth, being out of humour, and thinking very properly

that his sister was created for the especial purpose of cheering him under the influence of that complaint.

She succeeded in doing so, for her evenness of temper was remarkable. She agreed that it was a miserable day—that the wind was keen—that it was very likely to rain—that the ball had been a dull one, and that the post came in at Chirke Weston at an inconvenient time—and then, (for it does not answer to agree too much with people,) she qualified his censures of Lord Raymond, defended her father's black cravats, maintained there would be a great many people at the flower-show, and said she had not at all pitied him for being obliged to dance with Lady Farquhar, though she was fat, and five and forty.

George being a little restored by this time, began to grow confidential. He told Elizabeth that he was very thankful that things had turned out as they did between Harriet and him. That he was convinced she had no heart. That she was very well

suited to Lord Raymond, and he had no doubt but that they would be extremely happy!

He said this in rather an angry tone, and did not look as if he at all wished that their married life should prove an Elysium; so Elizabeth changed the subject.

"What do you think of my little friend?" she asked. "You must admire Margaret."

"Yes," he said. "She is a lovely little creature, but such a mere child, and so shy; and it is too much to expect that one can take the trouble to draw a woman out. I should not be surprised if she was to grow a little taller, which would be an advantage She dresses well, and her hand and arm i really a model. I was struck with it in mediately. And I am glad to perceive," I said, directing his glance to Margaret, she walked on in front with Hubert a Harriet against a pretty strong breeze. am glad to see that her foot and ancl equally perfect."

"Well," said Elizabeth smiling. '

the whole, your decision seems to be favourable."

"Yes, decidedly," said Mr. Gage quite seriously. "I am very well pleased; for I have not been used to be ashamed of my sister, and I should care to be ashamed of my sister-in-law; for that I suppose will be the end of it, Bessy?"

"I shall be very glad if it is so," replied Elizabeth.

"He might do worse," said Mr. Gage. "Sailors are so *inconséquent*. They often marry the most extraordinary persons—people that one never has heard of. Miss Capel, however, seems highly respectable. But," he added in a low tone, "to put that little doll in competition with such a woman as Harriet! Hubert need not fear me for a rival."

"Very fortunately," said Elizabeth smiling, "it would be dreadful if we were to have the Theban brothers over again."

"They fought for a crown, not a woman," said Mr. Gage, "being wise men."

"Is Mr. Gage very amusing to you, Bessy?" said Harriet, looking back, "that you don't come to join our party?"

Elizabeth good-naturedly quickened her steps, and Harriet said aloud to Margaret, "It is a charity to break in upon their tête-à-tête, for Mr. Gage has grown so dull, I think he must have caught cold on the race ground."

Margaret looked frightened, and Mr. Gage pretended not to hear Harriet's speech.

Margaret was very happy during her stay at Chirke Weston. Hubert Gage was always paying her compliments which she laughed at, and contriving all sorts of schemes for her amusement, for which she was much obliged.

She became every day more attached to Elizabeth; she admired her character, and loved her sweetness; and it was delightful to see the terms upon which she lived with her father and brothers.

George Gage paid Margaret the most

devoted attentions whenever he wished to pique Harriet, and at other times consigned her to the care of Hubert, as if he had too much delicacy to interfere with his brother's pretensions. Fortunately, she found amusement in the society of both brothers, without allowing their courtesies to penetrate her heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

And she will die ere she make her love known; and she will die if he woo her, rather than she will 'bate one breath of her accustomed coyness.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

It was the last day of Margaret's stay. Harriet was also to leave Chirke Weston the next morning. She was standing with Margaret in one of the drawing-room windows after breakfast, making her promise over and over again that she would come and see her at her uncle Singleton's, when Lord Raymond drove up to the house in his dog-cart. He produced out of this vehicle the two pointers which Harriet had been anxious to see; and, on a signal from her hand, he brought them up to the window where she was standing.

As soon as she had done admiring and commenting upon these pointers, Lord Raymond delivered them to his groom to pack up in their box again, and joined Harriet in the drawing-room. Elizabeth looked up from her carpet-work, and received Lord Raymond with her usual graceful calmness; and George Gage who was writing at the other end of the room, rising from his letters, took a chair by the side of that distinguished nobleman, and engaged him in conversation; and as he did this with an air of extreme politeness, Margaret did not guess that his sole motive was to expose his rival's deficiency in that useful art.

But Lord Raymond never actually conversed, he only answered questions. So, when he had told Mr. Gage that John Baldwin was a connexion of his, but that it was Ferdinand Baldwin who married Miss Thoresby; that he believed her fortune had been greatly overrated; that Ferdinand was a first cousin of John's;—

that certainly Miss Thoresby had been engaged to a Colonel Carpenter, who had thought himself very much ill-used when she broke off the engagement; that Henry Baldwin was a Roman Catholic, and that there were a great many of that name in Staffordshire, he had nothing more to say for himself; and rising to depart, he asked Harriet whether she had any message to send to her sister at Wardenscourt.

"Tell Lucy," said Harriet looking archly at Lord Raymond, "that I should be disposed to envy her if I were any where but at Chirke Weston."

As soon as Lord Raymond was gone, Mr. Gage stalked back to his writing, and Harriet, calling Margaret to her side, began a panegyric on his Lordship; vaunting his good principles, his kindness of heart, and above all his even temper.

As all these qualities may exist under a very ordinary exterior, Margaret had nothing to do but to acquiesce; but when Harriet went on to say that she thought

him unquestionably the most aristocratic man that she had ever seen, Margaret opened her eyes with a gesture of astonishment; and Mr. Gage, throwing down his pen, in something like a passion, said that Miss Conway was known to be original in her opinions; but that certainly, he imagined, she would find herself perfectly unique in this idea. That most people would find it difficult to credit from his appearance that Lord Raymond was a gentleman—and that, except the late Earl of D——, the peerage had seldom been disfigured by such a specimen of humanity."

"Did I say he was handsome, Squire Sullen?" retorted Harriet. "I merely gave my opinion of his deportment, which I consider quite fascinating."

"Unquestionably," Mr. Gage said, resuming his pen with great dignity. "Miss Conway's opinion of Lord Raymond was of more consequence than any other person's.

He merely regretted that he could not in this instance agree with it."

Harriet merely replied by one of her most scornful looks. Mr. Gage took up the newspaper, and Hubert, coming in at the moment, persuaded Elizabeth and Margaret to go with him to one of the hot-houses to see some beautiful American plants.

Now on this very morning it chanced that Mrs. Somerton felt it her duty to call at Chirke Weston.

For, as she said, it was impossible to know what that artful little creature, Margaret Capel was about with those two brothers, unless she went to see it with her own eyes; and that it was Blanche's business to counteract her as much as possible: that if Margaret had really entangled Hubert, to flirt with him would be a mere waste of time; but that although George was not an impressible subject, yet by management, something might be done with him. Even a little attention from so

fastidious a person might be of service to her; for there were several men in the neighbourhood who took for gospel all that George Gage chose to say.

"Ah!" said the amiable Blanche, "it is very well that I know how to manage matters without your help! See what you have done for my sister. Thank you! I don't wish to follow her example. I shall find a match for myself!"

"You are looking very well to day," said Mrs. Somerton, putting up her glass, "if you would but wear your hair a little lower on your face."

"Much obliged," retorted Blanche. "I say, look at my sister, as complete an old maid as ever lived; all owing to your valuable hints. She has nothing for it now but to go to Missionary meetings, and pick up a stray Methodist preacher."

"There is one thing," said Mrs. Somerton, exasperated by this attack. "I don't believe anybody ever had such ill-disposed ungrateful children as mine!"

" Chips of the old block, I suppose," returned Blanche laughing.

" Come, come ;" said Mrs. Somerton, as they reached the entrance to Chirke Weston, " this is not to the purpose ; recollect that George is your object to-day."

While this attack was preparing for the unconscious Mr. Gage, he was in the drawing-room pretending to read the paper, and employing himself in watching intently every movement of Harriet Conway.

As soon as Elizabeth was gone, Harriet took up a book, drew a footstool close to the fire, and sat down upon it. She wore a beautiful morning gown of purple Cashemere, worked in floss silk, and trimmed, and tied with cords and tassels. Her attitude was striking and graceful, and as she slowly turned the leaves of her book, the light of the fire sparkled on the costly rings that adorned her slender fingers.

Although Mr. Gage never removed his eyes from her, she feigned to be totally absorbed in her book, and unconscious of

his presence. At last he approached her under pretence of mending the fire.

She looked up and nodded to him.

"What is that you are reading?" said he. "A French novel? I thought ladies never did such things in public."

"I thought you knew, Squire—I mean Mr. Gage, that I am never ashamed of any thing I do," said Harriet. "Besides, this is a very readable one of Eugène Sue's."

"Yes—a certain class of French novels are very harmless," said Mr. Gage.

"Look!" said Harriet, turning the book round, and holding it up so that he might read the title: 'Arthur.'"

Now Mr. Gage had never read 'Arthur;' so he said directly, that it was a very clever work; indeed, in parts, really beautiful. There was something quite touching in one or two of the scenes.

As this might be safely said of any book written by Eugène Sue, Mr. Gage was not out of his depth.

Harriet acquiesced, and asked him what he thought of the character of Hélène.

Mr. Gage replied without hesitation, that it was very ably depicted, but that his ideas of female perfection were not exactly formed upon that model.

"Too statuesque, perhaps, for your taste," said Harriet.

"Yes, that was the case," Mr. Gage said, catching at the hint. "He thought something a little less unbending more attractive in the female character."

"And do you not think Arthur very interesting, in spite of his faults?" said Harriet.

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Gage, "but whether he would find any favour with the fair sex, you can determine better than me."

"I don't know. I can't quite make out," said Harriet. "You see one would never be prepared for so strange a disposition. But how beautifully he describes

scenery," she continued, turning the leaves. He makes quite a paradise of this cottage ornée."

"Your taste," said Mr. Gage, in a very pointed manner. "Your taste would lead you to a much less simple style of architecture."

"Oh, yes!" said Harriet putting up her book to conceal her smiles. "I hate cottages. My idea of perfect felicity is to be found only in a nobleman's seat."

"I trust," said Mr. Gage, looking very grand and injured, "that you will never have reason to acknowledge yourself mistaken."

"Why, George," said Harriet, just trusting her laughing eyes over the top of her book, "how long have you been an advocate for living in cottages? I should think they must be just one degree worse than barracks."

"Heartless!" muttered Mr. Gage, turning away, and walking to the window.

Harriet buried her face in her handker-

chief to stifle her laughter. She was not in the slightest degree afraid that Mr. Gage would transfer his regard to another, in consequence of her provoking mystifications. She felt that she had regained her power over him, and that as long as she remained single, so would he. But she delighted in mischief, and would not for the world have let him discover that she cared anything about him. At this instant the bell rang.

"Now don't for Heaven's sake, George, leave me to entertain your guests," said Harriet, looking up with a very flushed face, "it is only fair to stay and support me."

"Pray don't call them my guests," said Mr. Gage, coming back, however, "I should have rather a different visiting list if this house were in my possession."

"Yes, your list would be very extensive if you lived in one of your favourite cottages," said Harriet, seating herself on the sofa; "all the neighbouring farmers and

their wives. How I should like to see you playing cribbage with Farmer Jenkins!"

Mr. Gage leaning against the mantelpiece, "regretted that he was unable to follow all Miss Conway's flights of fancy," and "was not aware that he had said anything that could lead her to suppose he intended forming an intimacy with Farmer Jenkins."

The door was opened and Mrs. Somerton and her daughter were announced. Harriet bowed coldly; and Mr. Gage, after a still more frigid fashion.

Mrs. Somerton, who had seen the world, was not at all put out by this English reception; and Blanche with a manner full of *minauderie*, glanced sideways at Mr. Gage, and glided into a chair as near to him as she conveniently could. Now any person totally unacquainted with society, and forming their notions of good manners from abstract principles, would perhaps imagine that Mr. Gage and Harriet would instantly

begin to talk to the visitors, and endeavour to amuse them until Miss Gage should arrive. Not at all; they had seen enough of company, to know how much they might leave undone; a code much more extensively put in practice than that which might teach people how much to do.

Mr. Gage stared across at Mrs. Somerton. Harriet with her head drawn up, surveyed Blanche.

At last, Mr. Gage said to Harriet, "Have you any idea where Bessy is?"

"I suppose," said Harriet, "that she is somewhere among the hot-houses. Hubert said something about the American plants. I dare say she will be in to luncheon."

"It is not half past one yet," said Mr. Gage, pointing to the time-piece.

"That French piece of trumpery is always wrong," said Harriet.

"My watch is the same, all but two minutes," said Mr. Gage, taking it out.

"If they happened to meet your father, you know, he would carry them all over the country," returned Harriet.

"Of course he would," said Mr. Gage, "whenever I see his straw hat, I make a point of getting out of the way. I have no idea of being handed round the farm yard, and introduced to every fresh litter of pigs."

"Have not you?" said Harriet mischievously. "I thought those humble pleasures belonged especially to the sphere of life you are so partial to. Most cottages, I believe in these days, can boast a pig-stye."

Mr. Gage hardly knew whether to laugh or be angry; at that moment Elizabeth and Margaret made their appearance together, followed by Hubert with a splendid bouquet of flowers.

Elizabeth seated herself beside Mrs. Somerton. Hubert delivered the flowers to Margaret, and drew his chair close to hers.

"But what am I to do with all these, Mr. Hubert?" said Margaret.

"You are to wear all these heaths this evening, you know," he said selecting the heaths from the nosegay. "I will make a wreath for you."

"But how very smart I shall be," said Margaret, hesitatingly.

"Oh! you promised—you will not draw back; see this is the way I shall mix them. All the shades, from white to crimson—no, a cluster will be prettier than a wreath. You cannot refuse—your last day. Ah! how beautiful you will look—but that you always do. Come, you will promise to wear them?"

"Will you promise to talk something like sense then Mr. Hubert?" said Margaret archly. "These striped camellias are for you, Harriet."

"Thanks, little one," said Harriet. "Tell Hubert to keep them all in water for us till we go up to dress."

Mr. Gage, by this time, having noticed Blanche's childish, sparkling face, and pretty figure, condescended to say to her in a haughty tone. "Did you walk here?"

"To be sure!" said Blanche, "such a beautiful morning. I would not have had the carriage out on any account."

There was one slight drawback to her using a carriage, if she wished it; namely, that she did not possess a vehicle of any description. But Mr. Gage who was very little at home, and who knew nothing of the concerns of his neighbours, was easily imposed upon.

"Yes," he said rather less haughtily, "it was hardly worth while for a short distance."

"And then I am such a walker!" said Blanche, her pretty face kindling and dimpling with smiles; "I am never tired of wandering about this lovely country. I told mamma positively that I never would pass a season in town. My sister is there now with our relation, Lady K——, in the

midst of balls and gaieties. But I should think them a very poor exchange for the Ashdale woods."

Had Mr. Gage possessed more than the usual amount of penetration, he could not have been expected to guess that Blanche was in a perpetual ill-humour, because her sister was in town this season instead of herself; he merely thought it was odd for so pretty a girl to be contented with retirement, and that there was something rather attractive in the novelty of it.

"I suppose your tastes are quite pastoral," said Mr. Gage, relaxing still more of his dignity. "I dare say, if the truth were told, you have a pet lamb, which you crown with flowers every morning before breakfast."

"Oh, Mr. Gage!" said Blanche shaking her head with a little air of reproach, "the days are gone by when country people were obliged to depend on such childish amusements. We can have new books and music now, almost as soon as they appear in

town. Indeed, we can bring everything from London, but its smoky atmosphere."

Harriet who had been watching Hubert arranging the flowers in a glass, now turned round and beheld Mr. Gage actually talking to Blanche Somerton,—bending down and smiling at her. She coloured with anger and contempt.

"Mr. Gage," said she, pointing to a work-box close to him, "shall I trouble you to give me that box?"

Mr. Gage brought it her; she took out of it what she wanted, and then returned him the box. He sat down beside her still holding it.

"I think you don't often work," he said. "I do not remember to have seen you."

"No. This is not work exactly; this is crochet," said Harriet, holding up a purse of blue and silver twist. "Don't you think it very handsome?"

"Yes. Only so stiff; you could not draw it through a ring."

"Of course not; it is to have a clasp. See, this will match it very well; silver and turquoise. Now, wrap it up again in the silver paper. Put it neatly away. Now who do you think it is for?"

Mr. Gage's brow darkened.

"Uncle Singleton! When he plays at cards, he always likes to have a handsome purse. Would you believe it? I think it is only that he may have the pleasure of saying, 'My niece Harriet made this for me.!'"

"You are a great favourite there," said Mr. Gage, looking quite comfortable again.

"Can you wonder?" said Harriet, looking very like a coquette into his face.

"No indeed," replied Mr. Gage.

"It was there I first met Lord Raymond," said Harriet, heaving a deep sigh.

Mr. Gage put down her work-box, and rose from the sofa; but he did not return to Blanche, he went to his newspaper.

"Too bad!" said Blanche to herself, swelling with rage and spite. "She does not want him for herself, and yet she must needs interfere with me, when I was getting on so nicely. A malicious creature! I should like to drown her! I don't think anything in this world so mean as to interrupt another's flirtation when you have no good reason for doing it."

And Blanche crossed the room and tried very hard to detach Hubert from Margaret."

George Gage did not at all recover this last attack before dinner-time; he was very grand and sullen. Harriet, on the contrary, was in the wildest spirits. In many respects Margaret thought these two very well suited to each other. Kind and cordial as Harriet was to her, nothing could exceed her pride; and she was as haughty and as distant to people, whom she did not consider on a level with herself, as Mr. Gage could be. Her manners that morning were merely a sample of her general style of

behaviour. A cold stare, and a monosyllable were all she vouchsafed to any of the village people who happened to be on visiting terms at Chirke Weston, and the only subject on which she and George Gage were sure to sympathise, was disgust at the intrusion of such persons while they condescended to honour the house with their presence. At such times, their eyes would meet with an expression of endurance very different from the hostile looks they so frequently exchanged.

Harriet came down to dinner looking like an old picture. She wore a high dress of black satin, ornamented with Spanish buttons of gold filagree. Her hair was frizzed out round her head like some of Van Dyck's early pictures, and the striped camellias put in just behind the ear—she seemed determined to look her best this last evening.

George Gage stared directly. He had a great fancy for seeing women in fine clothes; and clothes that looked as if they cost a

great deal of money. He took her into dinner, and tried to command his temper, and keep up a conversation with her.

"You drove out after luncheon, did you not?"

"Yes. Did not you hear Uncle Gage and me planning a secret expedition together?"

"No. Might I ask where you went?"

"We went all the way to S——. Are you not very anxious to learn our object?"

"If it is not a breach of confidence, certainly."

"You could not guess, Mr. Gage?"

"I fear not."

"It was to get pack-thread for garden-nets."

"A very important mission," said Mr. Gage.

"You will think it important when the season comes for fruit; but, perhaps, you will not be here."

"I shall not. I go back to Ireland in about a fortnight."

"Still you know, though you will not be here to steal the plums, other people will be enjoying them; and you can leave word with the gardener to send your friend, little Blanche Somerton, the first basket of ripe cherries."

"I really do not know any person of that name," said Mr. Gage, indignantly.

"Well, after that!" said Harriet lifting up her hands. "Hubert, I hope you saw what was going on this morning."

"Oh, yes! I saw plainly enough," said Hubert. "She is a great flirt, that little thing; and rather pretty, I think."

"Very pretty!" said Harriet magnanimously. "I was not blaming Mr. Gage. I merely suggested a little offering—quite a cottage offering Mr. Gage."

"Oh! the little creature who was here this morning," said Mr. Gage; "rather a

nice little creature! Yes, I should not object taking her a basket of cherries."

"You could eat them with her like Napoleon, you know," said Harriet.

Here Hubert burst into a violent fit of laughter, at the idea of his brother doing anything like Napoleon.

"She is a very pretty girl," said Captain Gage, joining in the discussion. "Did not you dance with her a good deal at the ball, Hubert?"

"Yes, Sir, that is, I believe, once or twice. That miserable ball," he added in a low voice to Margaret.

"Oh, Mr. Hubert!" said Margaret laughing.

Elizabeth Gage did not say one word either for or against Blanche Somerton. She knew her to be almost devoid of good qualities; but she knew that people, men especially, will always form their own opinion.

"You shall sing, little one;" said Har-

riet to Margaret after tea. "I will not let you off any longer."

"No. It distresses her, Harriet," said Elizabeth kindly, "I never press her."

"I dare say. Is she to have her own way always? I want to hear the quality of her voice," said Harriet positively.

"Indeed, Harriet, I am not a man; you might let me have my way," said Margaret, shrinking back from the piano.

"My dear Harriet, I hope you apply that remark; there is a little bit of unconscious satire in it," said Elizabeth.

"Bah! there is no truth in it. I never tyrannise," said Harriet, laughing. "But as I am not so timid, I will try and sing you something. Mr. Gage, you like Italian music. Have you ever heard this?"

She sang beautifully. Margaret was entranced.

Mr. Gage came round to the piano to look at the name of the song. It was 'Senza pace, senza speme;' and on the top was

written, as if with a coarse lead pencil :—

" Harriet Conway,

" from Lord Raymond."

Now Margaret had seen Harriet busy writing something on the song with a pencil, a few minutes before she had sat down to sing, and she could not help wondering at the perseverance with which she contrived to teaze Mr. Gage. It need not be said that Lord Raymond had never given her the song, although from his long intimacy with her family there would have been no great crime if he had.

Mr. Gage, who had taken the song from the stand, dropped it again as if it had burnt his fingers.

" Is it not a beautiful thing ?" said Harriet looking up at Mr. Gage. " He has such a taste for music !"

" Who has, my dear ?" asked Captain Gage.

" Lord Raymond, uncle."

" Has he, indeed ?—I never knew that before, " said Captain Gage. " Why he has

never any music at his house, unless there is a very large party."

"He has no wife, you know, Uncle Gage, and he cannot play the piano himself."

"He must marry a good musician, then," said Captain Gage. "I don't know anything that more contributes to the cheerfulness of a family circle than a little good music."

"So Lord Raymond seems to think," said Mr. Gage, in a low voice to Harriet.

"Yes. Nothing so very first-rate though," said Harriet, thinking of Lucy, who played in a pleasing style, but nothing more, on the harp and piano.

"Oh! you are too modest," said Mr. Gage.

"Thank you," said Harriet laughing. "Do you think me then such a very good player?"

"Can you never be serious?" said Mr. Gage, turning away reproachfully.

Harriet laughed more merrily than before at the tone of this last remark. Margaret

watched them earnestly. Surely, she thought, this last evening something will be said, something will occur, to bring about an understanding. Harriet will surely not be able to keep up this appearance of indifference to the last.

But the tapers were brought in, people wished each other good night, and Harriet touched Mr. Gage's fingers, and bade him good bye, as if she should see him to-morrow. And the next day, before he had left his room, she was on her way to join her friends at Wardenscourt.

CHAPTER XIV.

Her words were like a stream of honey fleeting,
The which doth softly trickle from the hive,
Able to melt the hearer's heart unweeting
And eke to make the dead again alive.

, . . , ...
Much like an angel in all form and fashion.

SPENSER.

MARGARET was welcomed to Ashdale with such sincere pleasure by Mr. Grey and her Italian greyhound, that she could not find it in her heart to regret the social circle she left behind. Seated in a low chair by her uncle's side, with Gessina on her lap, she spent the evening alternately in playing with her beautiful pet, and of giving him a history of her week's visit.

Mr. Grey, like many people who live very retired, delighted in this species of

gossip. He was pleased to hear the names of the people who dined at Captain Gage's during her stay, and the dresses which Margaret had worn on each day. And if, during her narrative, she happened to mention a name that was familiar to him, he would interrupt her to remark that he had known a person of that name many years ago, who was of such a county; and to wonder whether the one Margaret had met, was related or not, to his old acquaintance.

These episodes were sometimes interrupted by the perverseness of Gessina, who would creep under the sofas, or the heavy chairs, and had to be fished out from these hiding places by the united industry of Mr. Haveloc and Margaret.

These little pursuits seemed to bring them still more acquainted, so that sometimes she ventured to appeal to him during her recollections to confirm her statements.

"And so she lost the ball at last, poor

child," said Mr. Grey drawing her towards him. "What a pity that was!"

"Oh, yes uncle! I was very sorry at first. But I had such a head-ache. Do you ever smoke cigars, Mr. Haveloc?"

"I have done such a thing," said he smiling. "But it is not a practice of mine."

"And how did you spend that evening, my love?" said Mr. Grey, who had not perceived the connexion between the ball and the cigars.

"I sat talking with Harriet Conway until I went to bed. Do you know Harriet, Sir?"

"I have not seen her, my dear, since she was a child," said Mr. Grey.

Oh! She is so handsome, Sir. Is she not, Mr. Haveloc? I think she was the handsomest girl in the party, except Bessy, I hardly know which to say."

"Which do you decide for, Claude?" asked Mr. Grey.

Mr. Haveloc paused a little, glanced at

Margaret with a smile, and said that he should not have considered either of those ladies the beauty of the party. He had hardly noticed Miss Harriet Conway, but if he recollected her, she had fine eyes."

Margaret felt embarrassed for a moment, but feeling sure that his remark could not have referred to her in any way, she let the subject pass, and continued her account.

"The flower-show was very delightful, Sir. There was a band of music, and such a beautiful display of plants. Captain Gage's gardener had a prize for hyacinths. Do you know, Sir, that four of my hyacinths are blown in my dressing-room? I think I shall bring them down into the drawing-room."

"Do, my love," said Mr. Grey.

"Bessy knew a great many people there, Sir; but Mr. Gage said he was bored. I wished he had not come with us. And Mr. Hubert frightened me, for he declared he was going to steal a cluster

of the flowers for Harriet and I; and there would have been such a scene!"

"And what did Miss Harriet say to that?" asked Mr. Grey.

"Oh! she laughed, and encouraged him," said Margaret. "But I think it was only to put me in a fright; and just then, Bessy came up, and asked if we would go, because Mr. Gage was so tired of it all."

"And did you have any more visitors afterwards?" asked Mr. Grey.

"Yes. Two foreigners, the Marquis de ——, (a very long name that I cannot remember), and his son. They talked Spanish with Harriet, and French with the others. Mr. Hubert used always to contrive that I should sit next one of them, that I might be obliged to speak French."

"Hubert is rather mischievous, is he not?" said Mr. Grey.

"Oh! yes, Sir; but very good-natured; and so is Captain Gage. We went every

day to see something or other. Once we went to hear service in the Cathedral. I was so glad that Mr. Gage was not of the party that morning. I wish, Mr. Haveloc, you would go on reading."

"I will, indeed," said he, taking up his book. "Only I have some curiosity to know first, why you do not like George Gage?"

"You should not listen, Mr. Haveloc. One cannot like every body in the world—though I did not say I disliked him."

"The Gages are all handsome," said Mr. Grey, musing. "George called on me one day last week. I think it must have been the day you went to the Cathedral. He said the ladies were out sight-seeing. I was very glad to see him; and I took it kind, his coming to a dull house like this, to pay a visit to a poor invalid."

"Kind, indeed!" exclaimed Margaret, her beautiful face all in a glow. "I think he ought to feel much pleasure in seeing an old friend again. I recollect Mr. Hubert

came directly to see you, and he often talks of your kindness to him when a boy."

Mr. Grey laughed, and patted her on the head. "Well, you like Hubert the best it seems," he said. "But now tell me how you passed your evenings when you were alone."

"That was the pleasantest time, Sir. After dinner we went into Bessy's sitting-room; and one day, Harriet showed me how to make wreaths and trimmings of natural flowers. Bessy had a large basket gathered for us, and I wore them that evening; and then, Harriet is so clever, she used to give us descriptions of the people who live near Singleton Manor, and make us die of laughing. She can talk like the poor people in Somersetshire. And then Mr. Hubert used to come in before tea-time, and sometimes he would roast chestnuts on the bars of the grate—and we ate them, Harriet and I. Bessy could never persuade him to have them

done by the housekeeper. And after tea, we had always plenty of music, for Captain Gage likes music so much. And one evening Mr. Hubert would have a twelfth cake, because he had not been at home for so many Twelfth Nights; and Bessy was obliged to get one made on purpose at S——. And I was the Queen, uncle! Captain Gage drew the King, and would not give it up to Mr. Hubert. You should have seen Mr. Gage, uncle. He was obliged to join in it all, half against his will; and Harriet laughed at him so much for being grand."

"And so you passed a merry time of it;" said Mr. Grey.

"Very, Sir. But I was very glad to drive up the old avenue again, and see you and Gessina. Do you know, Sir, Mason said that as soon as Gessina heard the carriage she was wild to get down stairs."

"Was she, my love?" said Mr. Grey. There was a pause.

Mr. Grey fell asleep, Margaret caressed

her dog, and Mr. Haveloc made a sketch of her attitude in the fly-leaf of his book.

At last Margaret looked up.

"Oh! Mr. Haveloc, you have been to Italy. Do you not allow Gessina to be a beauty? Blanche Somerton said I ought to have had a white greyhound."

"She is a very pretty creature," said Mr. Haveloc, coming over to her side of the fire. "I believe the white ones are more expensive, which is quite sufficient to account for some people's preference."

"Oh! I do not care about that. I like this fawn colour. I declare I never saw such a beautiful head. Bessy says that the next time I go to Chirke Weston, I am to be sure and take her with me."

"Miss Gage is always considerate," said Mr. Haveloc.

"I know you think very highly of her," said Margaret colouring, "because you once advised me to consult her; and I think, in that affair, her opinion was very like yours."

Mr. Haveloc smiled, and remained silent, watching Margaret, whose attitudes rivalled those of her greyhound in beauty.

"Mr. Haveloc," said Margaret, looking up again, and blushing, "what were you drawing just now?"

"So, you have some curiosity," he said, smiling.

"Because," she said timidly, "I should not wonder if you were drawing Gessina—and— I wish you would show it to me—if you were."

"With pleasure. I will just put a few more touches. You will not be satisfied if it is not a very flattering likeness."

"Have you done, Mr. Haveloc?"

"Not quite."

"Will you show it me presently, Mr. Haveloc? Will you show it me now?"

"You do not give me time to do my best," said he, as he handed her a sheet of note paper, on which he had just made a pretty little sketch of the greyhound.

"Oh, how exactly like! How very pretty! May I keep it, Mr. Haveloc?"

"If you please—I shall be too happy."

"I wish my uncle was awake," said Margaret looking towards him. "I should like to show it to him. I wonder if he would know it directly. I dare say he would!"

"Not a doubt of it," said Mr. Haveloc, "all Italian greyhounds are alike. Any picture of an Italian greyhound would do for your dog. Do you wish me to wake Mr. Grey, that he may decide the question?"

"Oh, no! what are you thinking of? People should never be wakened."

"Will you tell me now, why you do not like George Gage?"

"What, have you not forgotten that yet? Well I will tell you one reason. Because he stares so much."

Mr. Haveloc laughed. "I really did not think," he said, "that ladies resented that offence, so strongly. Fortunately I can-

not offend in that way, since I am half blind."

"I wish Mr. Gage was near-sighted," said Margaret laughing, "he is quite mistaken if he thinks ladies like to be stared at; even Harriet, who does not care for many things, told him one evening that it made her quite nervous to have him opposite when she was singing, looking into her mouth like a dentist."

"And when do you mean to ride out?" said Mr. Haveloc.

"Oh! do you know I had quite forgotten my horse," exclaimed Margaret, "Uncle Grey!—There I have waked him at last."

"What is it, my love?" said Mr. Grey looking up.

"Miss Capel is so dismayed at having waked you," said Mr. Haveloc laughing.

"Oh! I was not asleep," said Mr. Grey rubbing his eyes, "I have been listening to all you have been saying."

Mr. Haveloc and Margaret exchanged smiles.

"Will you let me ride out to morrow, dear uncle?"

"Yes, my love; you are quite sure of the horse, Claude. If somebody would go out first, just to try him; or if you have no engagement to-morrow, Claude, perhaps you would go with Margaret and Evans, just to see that all is right for the first time. Evans is a very steady man; afterwards I could trust him with comfort."

No one could mistake the delight that was visible on Mr. Haveloc's countenance at this proposition. He could not have asked to ride out with her, but here was a reason—a sufficient cause. "Nothing could give him more pleasure," he said, "he begged to know what time would suit Miss Capel, that he might be in the way."

Anybody but Mr. Grey would have noticed the impatience with which Mr. Haveloc looked forward to this ride: any one else would have been aware that it was some strong feeling that could make so

ordinary an occurrence a matter of so much importance to him.

Margaret never spent the morning in the library with them; and Mr. Haveloc settled to nothing; he neither read nor wrote, but wandered about the room, sometimes watching the weather, and sometimes glancing over the newspaper. But Mr. Grey having provided for Margaret's safety, forgot the subject altogether, and spent his time in puzzling over his steward's accounts, and cutting the leaves of a new review without taking any note of his companion's idleness. And when Margaret did make her appearance, looking beautiful with excitement, and he hastened to meet her, Mr. Grey followed him to the hall door giving him a string of cautions, which any third person could have told him was quite unnecessary in the present instance. He was quite eager enough to examine the girths and the curb, and to prevent her horse from going too fast.

It was a beautiful day; the trees were

just out and the young leaves trembled in the bright sunshine. There was that peculiar fragrance in the air, which results from the opening buds in shrubs and hedges; and in some places, the sweet breath of violets seemed to linger on the soft wind, mingled with the fresh scent of dewy tufts of moss.

Margaret had no fear, and the paces of her horse were so easy, that she felt no fatigue. Mr. Haveloc took the greatest care of her, and exerted himself to amuse her so effectually, that she was really sorry when her ride was concluded. Whether she would have enjoyed it quite as much with the groom, for her sole attendant, is a question that she had no present opportunity of solving; for Mr. Haveloc told Mr. Grey that he thought her horse went best in company, and that while he remained at Ashdale, he was entirely at the service of Miss Capel whenever she chose to ride out.

CHAPTER XV.

But who can tell what cause had that fair maid
To use him so that loved her so well?
Or who with blame can justly her upbraid
For loving not? For who can love compel?

SPENSER.

It was customary with Mr. Grey to pass his mornings in the library unless some very particular business caused him to take refuge in his study. He was fond of desultory reading, and was accomplished in the knowledge of several modern languages. Mr. Haveloc usually employed himself at the other end of the room, without any reference to Mr. Grey's occupations; reading with as much eagerness upon any subject that happened to engage his atten-

tion, as if he were still a candidate for academic honours.

They seldom exchanged a remark during these hours, unless Mr. Grey suddenly became alarmed at the steadfastness of his young friend's application, when he would favour him with some of those cautions, which he was in the habit of addressing to Margaret, regarding the injurious effect of too much study.

One morning a letter was brought to Mr. Grey, which he opened and looked at with some surprise, glanced at the signature, and exclaimed, "From Hubert Gage! How extraordinary! Why could not the silly fellow come and say what he wanted, instead of writing it?"

Mr. Haveloc looked up at the unwonted interruption, and seeing Mr. Grey reading his letter with many sounds of impatience and vexation, he could not avoid "hoping that there was no bad news from Chirke Weston."

"No; not bad news," said Mr. Grey

laying down his letter and his reading glasses upon it, and leaning back in his chair, as if quite tired out: "not exactly bad news."

This remark was, perhaps, rather calculated to excite than to gratify his curiosity; but Mr. Haveloc resumed his reading without farther inquiry, and Mr. Grey remained for some time in deep thought.

At last Mr. Grey looked up, and turned round to his companion.

"A very strange thing, Claude," said he. "I am sure, as far as I am concerned, the most unlooked-for occurrence. Here is Hubert Gage proposing for my little niece, Margaret—a mere baby!"

Mr. Haveloc started from his chair, made a step or two towards Mr. Grey, and then returned quietly to his seat, and made a great show of finding the place in his book again.

"Yes, it is very remarkable," said Mr. Grey, who had interpreted Mr. Haveloc's sudden movement into an expression of

surprise; "I could never have foreseen it. And really, Hubert Gage, a mere boy! Of course the connexion is highly honourable, impossible to be better; but at their age. Not that anything can be more fair and manly than his letter; but if he has Captain Gage's consent to fetter himself by an engagement of this kind before he is one and twenty years old—why his father has not half the sense I gave him credit for."

Mr. Haveloc was silent.

"Yet poor young fellow," said Mr. Grey, taking up his letter, "if he is in love as he says he is, perhaps all this impatience is more natural in him than in an older man. And although this love is very often a source of great inconvenience, yet we all look back to that period, whether successful or not, as to the most spiritual, and the happiest portion of our lives. Faith, I will do all I can for him in the business"

"And Miss Capel," said Mr. Haveloc, speaking with effort.

"Oh! for her, poor little girl, I dare say

she fancies herself attached to him. For I have often remarked, Claude, that when a handsome and agreeable young man pays a great deal of attention to an inexperienced girl, it generally ends in this way; first impressions are everything. And you heard her telling me the other night that Hubert used to roast chestnuts for her, and all that sort of thing. I dare say it is all for the best."

Mr. Haveloc made no reply. A dark frown settled on his face, and he leaned his head on his hands, seeming to be immersed in the folio volume that stood on a desk before him.

"If," he thought, "the love of a creature like Margaret can hinge upon such wretched trifles, why let it go. If she can love him, why should I regret her?"

Yet he felt that all he was worth would be too little to purchase such affection as hers would be, where it was freely given.

Both parties were silent for some time. Mr. Grey forgot the presence of Mr. Haveloc, so entirely was he engrossed with

the subject on his mind; and he was employing himself in making a mental estimate of the amount of Margaret's and Hubert's property, and the sum he meant to add to it, when he heard her voice and step in the drawing-room, half-dancing, half-singing, as she came near the library. The sounds ceased as she turned the handle of the door, and she entered with the most demure expression in the world.

"Uncle Grey, may I have the carriage after luncheon, if you please, to go to S—," said she advancing to him, "for I have broken my guitar string—this silver one, and I cannot play till I have got another."

"Yes, my love, certainly," said Mr. Grey, drawing her towards him, "are you busy now?"

"No; this is the last piece of business I have done," said Margaret laughing, and showing him the string, which she was twining round her fingers, "a very bad business; you cannot think how it startled me when it snapped."

"Have you learned that song which Hubert Gage gave you?" asked Mr. Grey.

"The Neapolitan one? Oh, yes! it is very easy;" said Margaret, singing one or two bars in a low tone, "Mr. Hubert thinks himself so fine because he can play that air on the guitar. It is the only tune he can play."

"Well, my love," said her uncle, "I have had a letter from Hubert Gage this morning. You may read it, if you will."

As he spoke. he put the letter into her hands. He entirely forgot that Mr. Haveloc was in the room; and even had he recollected it, he would have taken it for granted, that sitting at such a distance, and engaged in reading so closely, his presence would have been no drawback to the conversation he wished to hold with his niece. Margaret, standing with her back to him, never perceived him at all; and for Mr. Haveloc, he never imagined that Mr. Grey would have done more than give Margaret the letter, and recommend her to read it at

her leisure. He could not leave the room, except by passing Margaret; and he thought the sight of him would embarrass her while conversing on such a subject, therefore he remained where he was. And an intense curiosity to learn how she would receive such tidings, held him, breathless and motionless, until she left the room.

Margaret read the letter through attentively, and steadily, the crimson deepening every moment all over her face, and then looking up straight to her uncle as she returned it, she said:

"I am glad you will have to answer this letter, uncle, instead of me, since I have no practice in these matters; and it is unpleasant to be obliged to say—no."

"But, my dear child," said Mr. Grey, quite puzzled at receiving a reply so totally different to what he had expected, "what objection have you in the world to such a fine fellow as Hubert Gage?"

"He does not love me, uncle, that is one objection," said Margaret with a slight smile; "and I am sure I do not love him."

"Why, my child," said Mr. Grey, "what, do you suppose can induce a man to make you an offer, if he is not in love with you?"

"A great many reasons, uncle. I will not suppose that all the married people in the world who are so indifferent, or unhappy, have once loved each other. In my case, I can acquit Mr. Hubert of any interested motives. It is a passing fancy of his."

"But, my dear—time—you do not know how attached you might become to him. You would not like to give pain to the poor young man."

"Uncle," said Margaret, looking steadily into his face. "I must love a person a little, before I would suffer pain myself, rather than occasion it to him. I would do so for you, or Elizabeth, but not for Mr. Hubert Gage, I tell you frankly. If I thought he really loved me, I should be grieved and pained at the necessity of wounding his feelings; but, as it is, I am only ashamed, that he should have singled me out as the object of so trifling, so fleeting a regard."

"But, my dear little girl," persisted Mr. Grey, "what on earth can have put it into your head, that he does not love you?"

"Little things, uncle, that it would not be easy to put into words. It may seem vain, Sir, but at one time I was afraid he meant to pay me particular attention. A very little observation set me at rest on that point. I am young, and do not know much; but this is a matter of feeling, and not of knowledge. I am old enough to feel that he has made a mistake."

"Well, my love," said Mr. Grey, "I do not understand it:" he folded and unfolded the letter in his hand for some moments, and at last went on.

"You must reflect a little, my dear. This young man is of good family; highly connected, and, in the event of your marrying him, you would find yourself in as good a circle of connexions and acquaintances as you could possibly desire. He has something, and so have you. I would come forward, and I have no doubt his father

would come forward; and you could be able to keep a carriage, and have every comfort about you."

"I am afraid, uncle," said Margaret, smiling, "that I am not old enough to appreciate these advantages."

Her uncle paused again. "He will not be satisfied, my dear, with my reply. What do you say to seeing him yourself?"

"I had rather not, uncle," said Margaret blushing still more deeply. "It is rather embarrassing—it is not agreeable to discuss this subject, even with you, Sir."

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Grey, "we will see about it; but I can tell you the young man will not give it up so quietly, if you have not another attachment."

"I can understand that such a question concerns him," said Margaret, with a faltering in her voice; "and, therefore, if you please, you can tell him I am free in that respect; but if I am free, uncle, I need not choose a person whom I do not like."

"The idea of not liking Hubert Gage!" said Mr. Grey.

"I do like him, uncle, as an acquaintance, and shall do so, if he does not teaze me; but, as a suitor—why, Uncle Grey," said Margaret brightening up, "he will forget all about me now, before I forget him, though he does profess a regard for me that I cannot return."

"Well, my love," said Mr. Grey, "you shall act exactly as your feelings dictate; but it is an awkward business I can tell you, all this proposing and rejecting."

"Thank you, dear uncle," said Margaret leaning forward, and kissing him on the forehead. "But—I may have the carriage all the same, Sir, may I not, to go for my guitar string?"

"Oh! poor Hubert Gage," said Mr. Grey leaning back, as Margaret left the room, and looking very much exhausted. "If she can think of her guitar string at such a time, I am afraid there is a remarkably small chance for the young gentleman."

CHAPTER XVI.

But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
My will to her consent is but a part;
An she agree, within her scope of choice
Lies my consent and fair according voice.

SHAKESPEARE.

Which when he heard, he inly touched was
With tender ruth for her unworthy griefe;
And having cheered her, thus said; Faire Dame
In evils, counsell is the comfort chiefe,
Which though I be not wise enough to frame,
Yet as I well it meane, vouchsafe it without blame.

SPENSER.

As soon as Margaret had closed the door after her, Mr. Haveloc drew a long breath, like one relieved from an oppressive state of suspense; and remained for a short time in hesitation as to what his next step should be. His admiration of Margaret had risen

with every word that she had spoken; and had he followed the impulse of the moment, he would, more than once, have interrupted the even progress of the dialogue by rushing forward and throwing himself at her feet. He was delighted, and penetrated with the clear judgment, and the beautiful simplicity of character which she evinced. He resolved, with all the determination of a sufficiently wilful character, that he would spare no exertion to obtain her affection; and as a preliminary, which her youth rendered a matter of honour and propriety, he determined to demand the sanction of her uncle to his addresses, before he could attempt to engage the regard of Margaret. But just at this moment, that Mr. Grey had been so annoyed by the application of Hubert Gage, he felt a reluctance to enter upon the subject. Still there was no time to be lost. Margaret might receive another offer any day—it was as well to be early in the field. While he was making up his mind to this effect, Mr. Grey turned to the

table, and searched among the papers heaped in confusion around him, for his writing-case, that he might dispatch an answer to Hubert Gage; saying, as he took a sheet of paper for that purpose, "I do not know what to think—I cannot understand it all. I don't believe the child knows her own mind."

"I am sorry to interrupt you, Sir," said Mr. Haveloc, coming hastily forward, "still more sorry to demand your attention on my behalf at a time when you are engrossed by a disagreeable subject."

"Why it is disagreeable, Claude," said Mr. Grey, looking up and laying down his pen, "I never anticipated any objection on her side. Did you, now?"

"I never anticipated such a proposal," said Mr. Haveloc, "I imagined that every one would have considered, as I did, that Miss Capel was too young to receive such addresses."

"So she is," returned Mr. Grey, "but if I say so to Hubert, his answer will naturally

be that he will wait until she is older; now that is an answer that I think would not exactly meet her wishes."

Mr. Haveloc bowed his head.

"And," pursued Mr. Grey, "when there is not a single objection that can be urged against a man; it is rather difficult to give him a reason that shall dissuade him from continuing his suit."

"There is one reason that should content any man," said Mr. Haveloc, "indifference."

"It is the last that does content them, though," said Mr. Grey, taking up his pen and looking earnestly at it, "they think it is so easy to overcome it. They are a very singular race," said he—speaking of lovers as he would of Albinoes, or Cingalese, or other strange beings—"they have a great many troublesome peculiarities; sometimes so pertinacious; at other times so easily discouraged. And here is a match which, a few years hence, would be all I could desire for my niece; and the little romantic

creature absolutely throws the chance away. Not that I would influence her decision one way or other; Heaven forbid. But you were going to say something or other, Claude. Have you heard any thing farther from your tenant at Tynebrook?"

"I was about to trouble you upon a subject far more interesting to myself," said Mr. Haveloc, hesitating.

He had never felt so embarrassed in his life. It seemed to him that in everything but the mere accident of fortune, Hubert Gage was his superior. That he had the advantage in person, in manner, in that gaiety of disposition which is so generally attractive and endearing; that his character was unimpeached, and that he belonged to a profession which of itself would render him an object of interest to an Englishwoman. If Margaret had rejected this suitor, how could he expect to make a deeper impression on her heart?

It need not be said that this condition of feeling is very rare in the nobler sex, and

may be accounted for by the want of confidence which is said ever to accompany an earnest and engrossing passion.

Mr. Grey looked anxiously at his young friend; awaiting his disclosure with much curiosity.

"I feel at this moment," said Mr. Haveloc, endeavouring to speak with great composure, and failing signally in the attempt, "so very unworthy of the favour I am about to ask you, that it is with a painful sense of reluctance I proceed."

"I am sure, Claude, anything in the world that I can do for you," said Mr. Grey, growing still more puzzled as he marked Mr. Haveloc's evident embarrassment; "only," he added with a smile, "I hope you are not in love, because, as you see, in such a case I have no power at all."

"I think, Sir," said Mr. Haveloc quietly, "it would be difficult for any one to avoid that weakness, who had the happiness of being long in Miss Capel's society. I must confess myself entirely engrossed by the

hope of one day obtaining her affection; and my present anxiety is to gain your sanction to my pursuit."

Mr. Grey's blank, uplifted look of amazement can hardly be expressed. It was in vain to expect an immediate answer, for at first he could not really comprehend that a second application had been made to him for the hand of his niece: but Mr. Haveloc interpreted his silence into a reluctance to entrust Margaret to his care. His thoughts reverted immediately to his conduct at Florence, and he remained silent, and pale with anger and confusion.

After a pause of a few moments, Mr. Grey reached out his hand to him. "This gives me great pleasure, Claude," he said. "How it will turn out, is another matter. But you have my free consent, if that is of any use. But," he continued, interrupting the thanks which his companion was beginning to pour out, "I consider this quite a subject for the future. There is no hurry."

"Good Heaven, Sir, no hurry!" said Mr. Haveloc, "when every one that sees Miss Capel—"

"My dear Claude," said Mr. Grey smiling, "I am likely to be a little partial to my own niece; but I see plainly how it is. With Hubert Gage—poor fellow, I am very sorry for him—she was the first pretty girl he saw on his return; and sailors are proverbial for falling in love, and out of it, fortunately. There is no danger that she should be more sought in general society than other girls of her age and fortune. In a year's time you will find her just where you left her, depend upon it."

"And am I to leave her now, Sir, in all this uncertainty," exclaimed Mr. Haveloc, "and for a year. Good Heaven! Was there ever such a probation demanded of any one? A year Sir! In half that time, I may learn she is married to some one else."

"My good friend, your imagination is now rather active," said Mr. Grey. "No.

I do not bid you leave her until, whether soon or late, you have ascertained that she returns your regard, or that you become convinced that you cannot obtain it. Then it is my wish that you separate for a year; and if before that time has expired," he continued with a smile, "she is married to some one else, you will be willing to confess, Claude, that your loss has not been very great."

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Haveloc again, gazing vacantly forward, as if a year was a period without any known termination.

"Such is my wish, Claude," said Mr. Grey, "you are neither of you common characters; if you were, I might hasten the matter for fear either of you should change your minds, and so ensure to my niece a large property without the least apprehension for her future peace. But although the world rubs off all that is true and beautiful from most characters, it would take a great deal of such collision to destroy

the simplicity of her disposition; therefore, I wish that she should have the opportunity which a frequent intercourse with society gives, to make a selection, as freely as if you had not a hundred pounds in the world. Let her acceptance of you be a choice in the true acceptation of the word, a distinction of you from other people. And I have the same feeling with regard to yourself. You may not be altogether satisfied that you have obtained a beautiful child; you may feel, after a time, that you require the companionship of a more mature mind. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that you should try if the impression will stand the test of absence."

"Impossible, Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Haveloc; "of all torments in the world, to put off—to forego—the uncertainty—you do not consider."

"I think, Claude," said Mr. Grey, looking at his breathless companion with a quiet smile, "that I consider this subject a little more leisurely than you do at this moment."

"I endeavour to regard the subject with all calmness," said Mr. Haveloc, trembling with impatience; "but I cannot make out the necessity for my undergoing so long an interval of misery as you would assign to me. Pardon me, but I cannot think you a competent judge of Miss Capel's perfections."

"Much obliged," said Mr. Grey, quietly.

"You are under no suspense," continued Mr. Haveloc. "No one can break the tie which subsists between you and your niece; and therefore you do not view her with the trembling admiration of one who fears to risk everything in the parting from her."

"She is a very nice little girl," said Mr. Grey, "I see that plainly enough."

"I feel myself very inadequate to pronounce an eulogy upon her exquisite beauty, either of person or mind," said Mr. Haveloc, colouring deeply with indignation at the phrase, 'A nice little girl.' "But no one living rates these perfections higher than I do. And I must confess my extreme reluctance

to leave them unguarded to any man who chooses to enter for the prize: any common fellow, who without sincerity and without tenderness, desires to possess what all must covet."

"Ought you not," said Mr. Grey who seemed quietly to enjoy the discussion, "ought you not to ascribe to your mistress a little discrimination among all her perfections?"

"By no means," said Mr. Haveloc, "it is no merit in a woman."

And here he spoke perfect truth; for of all qualities, it is the one which men dislike most bitterly in the fair sex. It is just possible that the greater number of them imagine that they should fare but badly in the opinion of women if they were not able to deceive them readily.

"Just put the fire together a little, Claude," said Mr. Grey, "I do not find that this talking is warm work."

Mr. Haveloc did as he was desired.

"Well now, I suppose you are con-

tented," said Mr. Grey. "If you will ring for a taper, I will write this letter; it is growing very dark. I wonder what o'clock it is in the name of goodness?"

"I am not contented, Sir, by any means," said Mr. Haveloc ringing the bell; "but it is nearly seven, and you will not be able to write till after dinner."

"Bless me, and I am not dressed," said Mr. Grey, who in all his solitude never omitted that ceremony.

"Nor I, Sir," said Mr. Haveloc.

"You a lover," said Mr. Grey laughing. "Why, even Benedict brushed his hat o' mornings."

"If you would spare me another minute," said Mr. Haveloc.

"I am sure, Claude," said Mr. Grey, "I have given you reasons enough. It is not my fault if you will not apply them."

"They are very excellent," said Mr. Haveloc; "but certainly an absence of six months would answer every purpose."

"Or three months," said Mr. Grey.

"Undoubtedly, Sir."

"Six weeks, perhaps."

"Any separation whatever, Sir. I need no trial. I can undergo no change; and you may imagine it is not a very agreeable prospect to me that Miss Capel is to be taken into society during my absence, and invited to select some one whom she may like better than myself."

"Well—well," said Mr. Grey, "you will see the advantage of it one day or other. And now I have no more time to spare; my man will think me dead as it is. Seven o'clock, I declare. Well, thank Heaven, these things do not happen every day!"

"Hollo! a cabinet council!" exclaimed the well known voice of Mr. Casement; "let's make it a Council of Three. What is it all about? What not dressed, old gentleman? Then there's something in the wind, as sure as my name is Roger Casement. You had better tell me, for I shall be

sure to find it out. Has this young fellow been proposing for Miss Peggy?

Mr. Haveloc flung himself out of the room in great disdain; and Mr. Grey taking up his candlestick, said "that he was really in a hurry, and that Mr. Casement would no doubt find his niece in the drawing-room."

Margaret was there, ready dressed, and in some wonder that her very punctual uncle had not yet appeared.

Mr. Casement entered, took his usual place on the hearth-rug, and nodded to Margaret, who returned his salutation in silence.

"What's the matter, little woman—been crying?" asked Mr. Casement.

"No, Sir," returned Margaret in some surprise.

"What have they been doing all the afternoon, in there—uncle and the young fellow. Eh?"

"I dare say they have been reading, Sir,"

said Margaret, "my uncle was alone when I last saw him."

"Reading—bah!" said Mr. Casement; "I say, it is my belief that the young fellow is going to be married; eh?" And Mr. Casement stirred the fire, and watched her countenance by the blaze.

"It may be, Sir," said Margaret, with a quiet smile. "I am not in the secret."

"My old woman has got the rheumatism, so I am come to dine here," said Mr. Casement.

Margaret said she was sorry Mrs. Casement was suffering, and then there was a pause. Margaret played with her greyhound, and Mr. Casement whistled softly, and very much out of tune.

Mr. Haveloc was the first to make his appearance, he came up in a quiet serious manner to Margaret; apologized for being late, and said, that he had also to answer for Mr. Grey's delay, since he had detained him in the library talking of his affairs.

"I should not wonder if he had been gambling," said Mr. Casement in a soliloquy.

Mr. Haveloc never vouchsafed an answer to Mr. Casement's flattering remarks. He drew a chair near Margaret, and began to converse with her.

"What is he talking about, little woman?" asked Mr. Casement, after they had exchanged a few sentences in rather a low tone.

"Nothing, Sir," returned Margaret hastily.

"Faith! you are about right there," said Mr. Casement; "*nothing* is pretty much the amount of all the young fellows' speeches now a'days."

Mr. Haveloc started from his chair, and began to walk up and down the room. Mr. Casement followed his movements with a look of quiet satisfaction. He was never more entirely happy than when he had exasperated any one. As soon as tea was over, Mr. Grey said that he had a

letter to write, which he could not put off, and that Mr. Casement must excuse him for half an hour.

"Some of your business, I suppose, Master Claude;" said that amiable gentleman nodding his head in the direction of the library.

"I write my own letters of business," said Mr. Haveloc shortly.

"What is come to you all I can't think," pursued Mr. Casement. "But I'll worm it out of Master Grey, that's my comfort. And what are you about little woman? Why don't you give us some music?"

"I am working a bag, Sir," said Margaret rising and laying it down "but I will play if you wish it."

"Do," said Mr. Casement, taking up the bag and examining it. "Mercy, how smart! Who is this for—eh?"

"For Miss Gage," said Margaret with a faultering voice; and as she spoke, she pressed her hand on her side, and sat down suddenly.

Mr. Haveloc, who was standing at the piano arranging her books, now hurried up to her.

"I am afraid you are ill," he said, "do not think of playing. You are quite unequal to the exertion. Do you find the room too hot?"

"It is hot," said Margaret, who seemed on the verge of bursting into tears. "I think, I will go to my uncle, or, perhaps, I shall interrupt him. I—"

"Poor little soul, she has no mother!" said Mr. Casement, whose sagacity had discerned that something unusual occupied the minds of the party; and whose coarse nature was not so destitute of feeling, but that he saw how distressing must be the situation of a young girl, at any important crisis of her life, without the guidance of an experienced female friend.

This remark which Mr. Haveloc feared would entirely destroy her composure, had a contrary effect. After a struggle of a

moments, she forced back her tears,
l rose quietly up.
"I cannot play to you to night," said she
) Mr. Casement with a smile, "for I have a
ıead-ache, and I am afraid my hand would
not be very steady. Perhaps, Mr. Haveloc,
you will be so kind as to wish my uncle
good night for me."
She bowed her head, and was about to
leave the room, but Mr. Haveloc hastened
after her.
"Let me beg you not to leave us," he
said, "if you take a few turns in the con-
servatory where the air is cooler you will
find yourself better."
He led her as he spoke into the conserva-
tory, which opened from the drawing-room;
and Margaret finding it easier to say no-
thing, than to trust her voice with a reply,
suffered him to do as he pleased. He drev
her hand through his arm, and led h
slowly up and down.
"You must permit me to prescribe

you," said he gently, "for I think if there is anything that vexes you, you will feel less depressed in company than if you were to go up stairs and sit alone in your own room. For you have no companion—no—"

"No mother;" said Margaret, looking up into his face, with an expression of quiet sorrow that nearly upset all his plans; for had he then said all that he felt and hoped, he might have set out upon his travels the next morning.

"Are these your azalias?" said he, stopping before one of the stands, "they look very gay. Do you remember when you asked Mr. Grey for them; the first evening I came."

"Oh! do you recollect that, Mr. Haveloc!" said Margaret.

"I remember every particular of those few minutes you chose not to speak to me."

"Oh, Mr. Haveloc, you did not speak to *me*!" said Margaret, smiling, "and, of

course, strangers could not have any thing to say to each other."

"Have you read the book upon Etruria?" said Mr. Haveloc.

"Yes—long ago."

"And you were interested by it?"

"Oh! very much. It seems to me so strange that people should almost have forgotten the existence of such a nation, until lately; when these discoveries were made."

"Have you seen any account of the ruined cities in Central America?"

"No; what cities? Who built them?"

"There seems to be some doubt on that subject; but it is generally believed that these are the cities of the Mexicans which were actually depopulated by the Spaniards; and which now lie, temples, altars, and palaces, overrun with vegation, and buried in forests."

"And are they in any state of preservation?"

"Almost as they were left by their owners;

buildings of vast extent and elaborate workmanship. The work which has lately come out on this subject, is crowded with drawings, which give a perfect idea of these remains."

"I should like to see that book;" said Margaret.

"I shall have great pleasure in showing it to you. I have just been reading it," said Mr. Haveloc.

"And these Mexicans were then as civilized a people as the Etruscans?"

"More luxurious; but perhaps less artistical. There is a great deal of elegance in the Etruscan decorations."

"That is true. What a number of new things I have to learn. I did not know that any traces of those cities remained; and I believed there was a great deal of fiction in the accounts of the Spaniards."

"So did Robertson. He had been assured that there were no ruins in that part of the world; and the accounts of the Spanish

invaders were too magnificent to be believed without some confirmation."

"And who wrote this work?"

"An American named Stevens, who had displayed a great deal of enterprise and research. A singular occupation for one of that nation, for it was not a very likely means of earning dollars."

"Oh! there is a little prejudice in that remark, Mr. Haveloc," said Margaret. "Perhaps *all* Americans do not love money better than anything in the world."

"I will attend to all the good advice you give me;" said Mr. Haveloc, smiling, "you warn me, in the present instance, not to indulge in national prejudices."

"Ah! you may well stare at finding me alone," said Mr. Casement; "the young ones—philandering in the green-house yonder."

"Oh! I forgot Mr. Casement," said Margaret, blushing.

"So did I, utterly," returned Mr.

Haveloc, as he led Margaret back to the drawing-room.

Now Margaret's emotion had arisen from the idea which suddenly occurred to her, that Miss Gage might withdraw her friendship from her, on account of her rejection of Hubert Gage. But she found that she had greatly undervalued the calm and judicious mind of Elizabeth in attributing to her an injustice, which, however, natural, no dispassionate person could consider reasonable.

She called on Margaret the next day, and the first words she spoke were, to assure her that she was not come to plead her brother's cause; but to insist that what had passed, should prove no interruption to their friendship. Most gladly did Margaret, with many tears, give her this promise.

Elizabeth was too considerate to question her upon the cause of her rejection; but Margaret was glad to talk the matter over

with her—to hope, and to be assured that she had done nothing wrong throughout the business.

Elizabeth could not charge Margaret with having ever given Hubert any more encouragement than circumstances had almost demanded: but to Margaret's repeated declarations, that Hubert felt no real attachment to her—though she smiled—she shook her head. She knew, that occasionally, a great deal of strong feeling exists beneath a gay and careless temperament. But she said, that her father was exerting himself to get Hubert a ship, and as soon as he was afloat again, she hoped that Margaret would be as much at Chirke Weston as before.

This conversation, which Margaret, full of joy and gratitude, repeated to Mr. Grey, was by him very speedily retailed to Mr. Havelock; which relieved him of some apprehensions, that Margaret's agitation on the preceding evening had caused him.

namely, that she had begun to repent the decision she had given her uncle on the subject of Hubert Gage.

This interview removed from Margaret, the only source of regret, which remained to her on that subject. Her uncle was all kindness, and never referred to her decision; and to crown her content, Mr. Casement, about this time followed the example of his "old woman," and was laid up for several weeks with an attack of rheumatism.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co, 13, Poland Street.

MARGARET CAPEL.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1846.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

MARGARET CAPEL.

CHAPTER I.

Where'er we gaze, above, around, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound;
And bluest skies that harmonise the whole.
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound,
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll,
Between those hanging rocks that shock yet please the soul.

BYRON.

THERE is a portion of the coast in one of the southern counties of England, which, without aspiring to the sublimity of foreign scenery, possesses a certain grandeur from the abruptness and variety of its outline. High cliffs stand boldly forward into the sea,

while the intermediate shore rises and falls in gentle and uncertain undulations. For many miles inland, this irregular character of the surface continues. The ground rises and falls so suddenly, that in many places the trees which clothe the tops of the hills, almost shut out the sky from the spectator in the valley; while many coloured rocks, vary by their wild forms and rich tints, the even line of verdure which extends over the precipitous sides of these ravines.

This part of the country is rich in scenes of peculiar beauty. Brooks trickle from the shade of deep thickets, or sparkle in stony cells overgrown with creepers at the foot of a confused heap of broken rocks.

Hill and dale crowd upon each other in quick succession—every turn in the way leads to fresh aspects of the prospect. Now the traveller's view is bounded by high banks, overgrown with trees and tangled brushwood; now the ground breaks away in such a gradual slope, that the sea may be discerned in the distance, trembling in

the sunshine, or breaking in rough foam upon the long brown line of the beach.

Half way between one of these bold headlands and the shore, there stood a beautiful cottage, with a thickly wooded hill at the back, and a highly cultivated plot of garden ground in the front: while the side of the house stood so near the edge of a sudden descent in the cliff, that nothing but a broad terrace-walk intervened between the garden-windows, and the abrupt declivity which was washed by the waves when the tide was higher than usual.

It was a brilliant evening. The sun had almost descended to the horizon, and a long pathway of golden light fell upon the calm sea, and the wet sand from which the waves had just receded.

A dim radiance seemed to fill the air, and to blend hills, trees, and sky together in one soft and many tinted confusion of colours; while the lengthened rays threaded their brilliant way among the slender stems of the trees, and dropped like diamonds

upon the dark rivulets that lay in shadow among the brushwood during the early part of the day.

It was an evening when the whole earth looked so bright, so costly, steeped in sunlight, and surrendered to the stillness which belongs to that quiet hour, that it seemed as if this lower world might be fitly inhabited only by fairies or other such fragile creatures of the imagination. Such, however, were not the denizens of the cottage by the hill-side; but a comely old lady in an antique cap and black silk gown, who had the appearance of a housekeeper, or confidential servant, and who was leaning over the gothic gate at the end of the shrubbery, and looking along the winding road, as if on the watch for some expected travellers.

Her patience was not put to any lengthened test. In a few minutes, a carriage was seen rapidly advancing to the house. The old woman retreated to the porch; the carriage drew up, and a lady of a

commanding aspect descended, followed by a slight graceful girl.

"Ah! nurse, dear nurse! how glad I am to see you!" exclaimed the young lady, throwing herself into the old woman's arms.

"Welcome to England! Welcome back, my darling!" said the nurse, endeavouring to execute a curtsey to the elder lady, while imprisoned in the embrace of the younger one.

"I am rejoiced to see you again, nurse Grant," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, the elder of the two ladies, "Aveline, my love, we are just in the way here—let us go in."

"Yes, mamma. I long to see the dear rooms again. How comfortable every thing looks! Nurse, come in. Mamma, you said that nurse should drink tea with us to-night."

"Yes, if nurse pleases," said the lady, as they went into the drawing-room, where tea was awaiting them in all the English delicacy of that meal. "Aveline has been depending on your

company all the way from Southampton, Mrs. Grant."

"Bless her, the darling!" said the old woman. "She is tired with her journey, is she not? I hope she means to eat something. A fresh egg, or some cold chicken, Miss Aveline?"

"Eat, nurse! you will see how I eat;" said the young lady drawing to the table. "I should be ashamed that anybody but you should see me eat after a long journey. I am so hungry!"

"Her appetite is very good," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, in a decided tone. "She is come back in every respect, nurse, better than she was. Her stay in Italy has been of the utmost advantage to her."

"Thank God!" said Mrs. Grant, looking earnestly at the young lady. "There is some good then in foreign parts."

"Oh, nurse!" cried Aveline. "Not a word against Italy. It is the only country to enjoy and improve life. If it were not

that this is our home, I could have spent my life at Naples, or—Sorrento."

"You were very fond of Sorrento," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, looking inquiringly at her daughter.

"Yes. That is, I was tired of it at last. It was a great relief to go on to Milan, there is something in the sea-side that—a monotony I mean—after—"

"Yet, you could have spent your life there;" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick in a subdued tone.

"In Italy, mamma? At any place in Italy. It is not the spot, but the thin warm air that makes me feel so full of life. Oh, dear nurse, you do look so handsome. You cannot think how ugly the old Italian women are, with their thick brown skins and deep wrinkles, and coarse grizzled hair. English people have certainly a more delicate texture. Even I was thought pretty in Italy."

"Pretty in Italy!" said the old lady

indignantly. "I fancy, Miss Aveline, the gentlemen must be much changed since my time, if you are not thought pretty anywhere."

"Oh, hush, nurse!" said Aveline lifting up her finger. "It is only safe to tell little children they are pretty. Grown up ones are too ready to believe it."

"It is little matter here, Miss Aveline," said the old woman. "You have no neighbours."

"No neighbours, nurse? I was but waiting until we had finished tea to ask you about them all. How is the good old widow by the church—and Mrs. Wood, the baker—and young Mrs. Wood at the post-office? And Harding, the carpenter—and the fisherman's family on the other side of the cliff? Is little Jane as pretty as ever? Of course not. Her father I know has cut all her curls off, as he always does, and she is beginning to lose her teeth; so that she will not be fit to look at for these ten years."

While she was talking on in this lively

manner, the old woman kept her eyes fixed on her face with a serious and anxious expression.

Aveline was fearfully thin; her hands, which she used in speaking, more than an English woman, were almost transparent; and from fatigue, the blue veins had risen over them in every direction. The colour in her cheeks was fixed like a bright spot of rouge under each eye, giving a brilliancy that was almost fierce in its expression to eyes that were dark as night, and remarkable for their size.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who followed the nurse's looks with an eagerness that she could scarcely repress, caught her eye and remained silent, fixing her gaze upon the old woman's countenance with an intensity that she could hardly sustain. It seemed as if she ardently desired to read the nurse's opinion of her child, but was equally anxious that she should not then express it.

"Well, nurse," said Aveline, "what news? I hope all these good people are not dead,

that you keep such a profound silence upon their proceedings."

"All pretty much as you left them, Miss Aveline," said the nurse, rousing herself from her contemplation. "I cannot speak positively with respect to the beauty of the fisherman's children; though I always see three or four curly heads round his door when I pass. He lost one poor little one in the winter with the hooping cough. The neighbours said it was a mercy, as he had such a large family, but I don't know that the parents felt the less on that account."

"Poor people!" said Aveline. "I'll tell you what, mamma, I shall get up early to-morrow, and go down to the cottage with Susan, and buy some prawns for breakfast; and then I shall see what the children would like as a present. I am always so glad when people are in want of nice clean little straw bonnets. There is nothing romantic in giving away flannel petticoats or thick worsted stockings."

"Remember, Miss Aveline," said the

nurse, " that you give away a great deal of comfort with those warm clothes."

" And if you intend to take a long walk to-morrow," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, " you had better not sit up later to night. You have had a long journey, and should be prudent ; though you bore it remarkably well."

But Aveline was unwilling to retire. Although she was evidently suffering from over fatigue, she persisted in wandering restlessly round the room, looking at all the trifling ornaments with which it was strewn. Mrs Grant noticed with pain that her step was languid, and that she stooped very much as she walked. Presently she was seized with a distressing fit of coughing.

" A lozenge, if you please, Mamma, " said Aveline, coming up to her mother's chair.

" Now Aveline I know you are tired," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, " take your lozenges and go to bed at once. She always coughs," she said turning to Mrs. Grant, " when she is over fatigued. She always did from a child."

"Come, Miss Aveline," said Mrs. Grant, "I am going home in a minute—le tme see you off. Dear heart! how I recollect the time when you were a little girl; what a trouble there always was to get you to bed."

"Why what particular secrets have you good people to talk over that you wish me away?" said Aveline laughing, "what account have you to give mamma of the turkey poults and the guinea fowls that I may not hear? But, good night, nurse; you will have me plaguing you early to morrow, at your cottage, and pillaging your strawberry beds, which you know are a great deal better than ours. As for you, mamma, I shall not say good night, because you will be upstairs long before I am asleep."

"Her spirits are excellent, nurse," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, in a tone that seemed as if she was desirous to be assured of the fact.

"They are—very high, Ma'am;" said Mrs. Grant.

"How do you think she is looking?" asked Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"I shall tell better to morrow, Ma'am," said the old woman with rather an unsteady voice; "I should like, I confess to see her looking a little less thin."

"She was always thin as a child if you remember, Mrs. Grant, and when a girl grows very tall, she naturally grows thin at the same time. I think nothing of that."

"No, no, Ma'am," said Mrs. Grant cheerfully, "young girls will look thin sometimes."

"She was very ill at Nice you know; the north-east wind brought back her cough and frightened us very much. And we had a desponding kind of a man as our medical attendant. There is nothing so unfavourable to an invalid as one of those over-anxious people about them. But, you see, now the weather is warm she is getting on nicely."

Mrs. Grant felt her hopes sinking fast away before the news that the medical

man's opinion was an unfavourable one. She thought it a bad sign that he should despond, where no particular interest led him to exaggerate the case.

"You can have no idea," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "of what we suffered at Nice. You have heard of the prejudice the Italians entertain against any illness that they consider to be of a consumptive tendency. And Aveline having something of a cough—in short, Mrs. Grant, they fancied that my poor child was in a decline; and when she was at the worst, they took fright, and ordered us out of our lodgings at a moment's notice. Aveline was too ill to travel —our hostess was peremptory—and I knew well that no other house would take us in. It was then that a country-woman of ours, a Mrs. Maxwell Dorset, hearing of our distress, sought us out, and instantly offered us apartments in her house. It was impossible to stand on ceremony at such a time. I accepted her kindness, and had we been

her nearest relatives, we could not have been more warmly welcomed nor more carefully attended."

"Thank God that you are safe again on English ground," said the old nurse; "where, at least, we do not turn sick people into the streets, the Pagans! And Heaven reward the good lady who took compassion on you in your need."

And so saying, Mrs. Grant took her departure.

As soon as Mrs. Fitzpatrick was alone, she sat down before her writing case, and leaning her head on her hand seemed lost in thought. She had but few and distant relations, and since her widowhood had lived in such retirement, that except two or three neighbouring families she numbered as few friends. She had in early life, lived much in the world; but having withdrawn into solitude, the world had paid her the usual compliment, and forgotten her existence. She had lost several children when very young, and all her affections centred

upon this only girl whose health was so precarious. She wrote a few lines to a medical man of some eminence who lived a few miles off, to announce her return, and to beg that he would lose no time in paying them a visit.

"It is best to be upon the safe side;" she said to herself, "Aveline is gaining strength; but Mr. Lindsay may point out some means that would escape me. He is so clever, and has known her constitution from a child. I am sure he will think she is improved by her residence abroad."

So saying she rose to retire for the night; and casting her eyes round the room, she saw lying about, Aveline's gloves, her handkerchief and scarf, which she had thrown aside and forgotten, with the carelessness of youth. These she gathered up and folded together with that indiscribable air of tenderness, which, in a mother, sometimes extends itself to the trifles that her child has worn or touched; and then went up stairs to take a last look at Aveline—and to sleep, if she could.

CHAPTER II.

Mighty power, all powers above!
Great unconquerable Love!
Thou who liest in dimple sleek,
On the tender virgin's cheek:
Thee the rich and great obey;
Every creature owns thy sway.
O'er the wide earth, and o'er the main
Extends thy universal reign.

SOPHOCLES.

PERHAPS few things are more curious to those who, as bystanders, contemplate the game of life, than to see how in the stream of time, persons the most divided, and the least likely to be brought into contact, are whirled by those resistless waves nearer and nearer, until at last they meet; or if no col-

lision takes place, still the course of the one, draws into its channel, or modifies in some strange way the course of the other.

Margaret little thought as she sat dreaming over her lot at Ashdale, that a sick girl in another county, whom she had never seen, and whose name she had never heard, was to exercise a strange influence over her future fate.

Mr. Haveloc was constantly at Ashdale. He went, it is true, backwards and forwards from his own place to that of Mr Grey, but his visits to his home were wonderfully short, and those at Ashdale longer and longer. His attention, his devotion to Margaret increased daily; she never had occasion to form a wish. He seemed to divine all her thoughts, to anticipate everything that she could by possibility enjoy. And his was especially the kind of character to interest her; his failings were not of a nature to come in her way, and the earnestness of his disposition suited her ideas of the romance of love. She was not likely to mistake

a devotion that knew no pause, that entertained no other idea than herself day after day.

Then his knowledge, which though rather desultory, was unusual in a man who had not to earn his living—his command of languages, his accomplishments—all things that he never cared to bring forward, but that accident discovered to her by degrees, increased his power over her mind.

Men cannot forgive acquirement in a woman, though they will sometimes pardon a sort of natural cleverness; but it is a common story that women are swayed by genius or learning in a man.

Margaret was hardly aware of the impatience of his temper, which he never showed except to Mr. Casement, when she fully sympathised with him; but she daily noticed his attention to her uncle, his anxiety about his health, and the readiness with which he would give up his evenings to amuse his old friend. All that she had heard of him before their acquaintance was merged into the facts which were to his ad-

vantage. She remembered the defence of the lady and her daughter in Calabria. She forgot all about Mrs. Maxwell Dorset.

At first, after her rejection of Hubert Gage, she was a good deal annoyed and distressed by his perseverance. He called on Mr. Grey, he wrote to her, he described himself as distracted, herself as mistaken. He was determined to believe that they were made for each other; and that Margaret was under some strong delusion when she did not think as he did on that subject. Margaret began to dread and dislike the very name of Hubert Gage; she feared to meet him in her walks; every ring at the bell gave her the apprehension that he was coming to see her. And whether it was his youth or his disposition, that must be blamed for the fact, he acted very unreasonably in the affair. He did not take his disappointment at all like a philosopher; and to crown everything, when Captain Gage had with infinite difficulty procured him a ship, he declined the appointment,

upon some trivial excuse, and persisted in remaining in the neighbourhood; to the great vexation of his family, and the annoyance of Margaret.

At last he was persuaded to accompany his brother who was returning to Ireland; and then Margaret had an interval of peace. She was able to see Elizabeth whenever she pleased; and Mr. Grey left off pitying poor Hubert, when he no longer saw him passing the house, or looking disconsolate at church.

As Margaret had no female companion, her natural delicacy of feeling told her that she ought never to be alone with Mr. Haveloc: but those quiet evenings were almost tête-à-tête when her uncle slept in his easy chair, and she sat working by the fire, with Mr. Haveloc always by her side, talking or reading to her in a low voice, or making her speak Italian, and playfully correcting her mistakes.

And when the spring mellowed into summer, and Mr. Grey had his chair moved to

the large window that opened upon the broad terrace, Mr. Haveloc would persuade Margaret to pace up and down the walk, always in sight, though not in hearing, of her kind uncle, whose great delight was to watch them as they passed and repassed.

The moon had risen, and gleamed brightly behind one of the dark cedars upon the lawn. Part of the smooth turf was almost whitened by its peculiar light, while the trees cast their inky shadows forward upon the grass. Every flower, half closed and hung with dew, gave forth its sweetest fragrance.

"And you like sunlight really better than this, Mr. Haveloc?" said Margaret, as they paused to look upon the landscape.

"Good honest sunlight—strong enough to steep everything in mist, I really do," replied Mr. Haveloc.

"You are thinking of Italy?"

"No; of English sunshine. I never think of Italy."

These last words were spoken as if he

meant to infer that there was something a great deal more attractive than Italy in her near neighbourhood.

Her hand was resting on his arm; he pressed it, and she did not attempt to withdraw it. She felt, no doubt respecting his love; he expressed it in his manner, and she was sure he would not act a falsehood. It was all under her uncle's eye, and if he had disapproved of it, he would have put a stop to it before now. It made her perfectly happy, and a little frightened only when she thought he was on the point of saying something decisive. She would so gladly have gone on exactly as they were then.

"'This is very pretty," said Mr. Haveloc, as they again paused opposite to the dark mournful cedars.

"'Oh, beautiful!" returned Margaret. "If there were but some old oaks about the place: but those ash-trees in the meadow near the copse—those are really splendid, are they not?"

"Very fine! When I was staying here as Mr. Grey's ward, I believe I used to to sketch those trees once a week."

"I wish I could sketch!"

"Do you? I have no respect for the arts; I had rather a person should appreciate pictures than paint them."

"But do you not think painting them helps one to appreciate them?"

"I think it teaches one to know the difficulties, but not to feel the sentiment."

"Uncle Grey, do you smell the Chinese honeysuckle?" asked Margaret, pausing before the window.

"Yes my love; it is very strong to-night."

"Are you ready for your tea, uncle?"

"I shall be in about ten minutes, my dear."

"Can you guess ten minutes, Mr. Haveloc?"

Mr. Haveloc looked at his watch, and could not distinguish the figures. Margaret

thought she could see better. He held the watch to her—she pored over it in vain.

"You must guess it now, Mr. Haveloc."

"Mr. Grey is not very particular," said Mr. Haveloc, "I think I may venture."

They walked on to the end of the terrace.

"Do you recollect one day when I kept the dinner waiting," said Mr. Haveloc.

"Oh, yes! I remember, said Margaret with a sigh—it was the day that had begun her troubles with Hubert Gage. "Mr. Casement was so cross because he could not fathom your business with Mr. Grey."

"What a long deliverance we have had from the old monster," said Mr Haveloc.

"Oh, yes! I was so glad when—" Margaret stopped short.

"When he was laid up with the rheumatism," added Mr. Haveloc, laughing.

"Oh, no! not exactly. One ought not to be glad of that; but really, I think I

rejoiced that anything kept him out of the way."

"Gessina is growing quite fat," said Mr. Haveloc, as the beautiful creature bounded towards them.

"Stop! I am going to carry her," said Margaret stooping down.

"Cannot you trust me to do that?" asked Mr. Haveloc.

"No; because I am going to wrap her in a corner of my shawl."

"Stay, do not give her too much," said Mr. Haveloc, assisting in the distribution of the shawl, "you must take care of yourself, in the evening air.

"She has had so much running about to-day," said Margaret.

"Yes, I saw you taking her out to exercise this morning, before breakfast."

"Did you? When we were on the lawn?"

"Yes, with that Indian-rubber ball you made her a present of."

"You laugh, but it is a capital ball for Gessina to play with."

"I thought Gessina and her mistress both seemed to enjoy it very much."

"I did not know you were up then, Mr. Haveloc."

"I had not left my room, I confess."

"How very idle!"

"Oh, it was! but then I had been sitting up half the night."

"What a strange fancy of yours."

"I was writing letters."

"What! with all the day before you?"

"I like to spend the day in your company."

Here a low growl that seemed hardly human, made both start violently. Margaret dropped Gessina. Mr. Haveloc turned sharply round.

"Ugh! little woman; are you going to give us tea to-night?" growled Mr. Casement.

"Oh, dear yes, Sir. I declare I did not

know what time it was," said Margaret hastily.

"There is not the slightest hurry," said Mr. Haveloc detaining Margaret by the hand, "there can be no possible occasion for you to make tea before the usual time."

Margaret looked up in deprecation of his contemptuous tone. Mr. Casement turned to hobble back to the house.

"Ugh, sweethearts!" he grumbled, as he left them.

Margaret blushed crimson. Mr. Haveloc still holding her hand, walking slowly and silently in the same direction. At last, in that calm voice which in people of impatient temper always marks strong emotion, he said:—

"He is right Margaret—I love you!"

Margaret was excessively agitated—she trembled violently; but the transparent candour of her nature did not now desert her. In a faultering tone she replied:—

"I thought so."

"Come along, little woman," said Mr. Casement as Margaret stepped in at the window. "It is well I am come among you again. Poor uncle is laid on the shelf now; that's very plain."

"Did I keep you waiting, uncle?" said Margaret softly as she took her place before the urn.

"No, my love, never mind what he says. You know his ways by this time."

"Come, sit down, youngster, and don't make a fuss. Take it easy," said Mr. Casement addressing Mr. Haveloc, who was behind Margaret's chair.

Margaret ventured to cast an imploring glance at Mr. Haveloc, who regarded Mr. Casement as if he should like to reduce him to ashes; but being unprovided with any apparatus for this ceremony, he sat down beside Margaret, without making any reply.

It seemed as if Mr. Casement would never go that evening. He wrangled

through one game of piquet after another; at last he got up. "Well, good night Master Grey," he said, "if you are blind-folded, I am not. Those young ones have been muttering at the window there, ever since we sat down to cards."

"What is it Claude?" asked Mr. Grey, as soon as Mr. Casement had gone.

Mr. Haveloc told him what it was. Margaret laid her head on her uncle's shoulder —he put his arm round her waist. "Well then, Claude," he said, "your best plan is to set off to-morrow morning; the sooner you go, the sooner you will come back."

Margaret looked up with a face suddenly blanched even to her lips. "What—go away—leave me, uncle?" she said. Her voice failed her; almost her breath; she had not believed it possible that they should ever be parted.

Mr. Grey explained to Margaret as he had before explained to Mr. Haveloc his reasons for insisting on this measure.

When he had finished, she burst into one

of those paroxysms of tears that she only gave way to under very strong emotion. Mr. Haveloc hung over her chair in speechless distress. Mr. Grey endeavoured in the tenderest manner to moderate her agitation.

"You see, my child," he said, "you are but seventeen, and very young for your age; and this fellow here, somewhere about two-and-twenty. It is very important you should both know your own minds a little more clearly than you can do now. In such serious affairs, it is right to be very cautious. You see, my dear little girl, what day of the month is it? You see, a year soon passes; and next 14th of June, he will be here again."

Margaret checked her tears, and tried to reward his efforts with a smile.

"Well, then, Claude, you and I must have a little conversation together. Wish him good night, my child; you had better part now and not see each other to-morrow morning. It is wisest, is it not Claude?

There give her a kiss and have done with it. That's good children!"

Margaret was speechless with grief: the last words Mr. Haveloc addressed to her as he led her to the door, were, "If I ever bestow a thought upon another, forget me; I can invoke no heavier curse upon my head."

CHAPTER III.

I. His food—sharp sorrow, ever galling doubt,
Fear, that aye nettles near the core of love—
And long suspense that maketh faint the heart;
Patience it may be, and much jealousy,
And all that fretteth youth to timeless age.
And what the recompence?

I. To sleep awhile;
Dreaming of fairy worlds bestrewn with flowers.
And close companionship of equal hearts;
Warm, faultless, kind, unspotted, human hearts!
Of hope so bright, as never felt a care,
And love, that if care was, would smile it down.
Then wake—like Ariadne on the shore,
To battle with the tempest—but alone!

ANON.

EVELINE was up the next morning as y as she had threatened; and with the lessness peculiar to her complaint, she not content with a walk to the fisher-

man's cottage to buy prawns, but when she returned, finding that it still wanted some minutes to breakfast time, she wandered out into the garden, and began working at the flower-beds.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick was perfectly astonished when she came down to find her daughter weeding and hoeing, in her straw bonnet and garden gloves.

"I really cannot help it, mamma," was Aveline's reply to Mrs. Fitzpatrick's remonstrances; "it is so pleasant to feel better, that I could not resist a little independance of action. I have made your petunias look quite another thing."

"Here are some beautiful strawberries, Aveline," said her mother, "if you go out rambling to-day you must fortify yourself with a good breakfast."

"Yes! not strawberries, mamma. I will try some prawns. Jane's brother caught these. Tom. I don't know if you have ever seen him. There are two Toms. The other one is a cousin, and not nearly

so good as the real Tom, Brand's eldest boy. I am afraid the other Tom is rather suspected of smuggling; but then what a temptation. This is just the coast for adventure."

"But all this time, Aveline, you are eating nothing," said her mother, looking anxiously at the trembling hands with which she held her tea-cup.

"Presently, mamma. I always need a little self-encouragement before I begin anything so important as breakfast. No, I think I will not venture on the prawns. I will take some strawberries; they are too fine to be wasted. I am going to have some cream with them—to make quite a feast, as the little children call it. And now, mamma, you must have one half, and I will take the other."

Aveline having divided the strawberries, tasted them, and they shared the same fate with the prawns; then she broke a delicate crust off the little loaf, and having tasted that, declared that she had finished her

breakfast, and that as soon as Mark could clear away, she meant to sit down to her drawing for a little while.

"You must not undertake too much; Aveline," said her mother. "Remember that you can only expect to get well by degrees."

Aveline laughed and brought forward her portfolio to select a sketch.

"This is the one I wished to finish, mamma," she said. "Brand's cottage, with all those good masses of rock behind it, and the nets and children at the door. I sketched it before I went abroad."

"Let me rub your colours for you," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, taking a cake from her daughter's unsteady hand.

"Thank you, mamma. I am really very idle to let you do it for me," said Aveline, setting to work hurriedly. "I feel at home with my pencil. I wish I could model a little better. There is something so incomplete in all my busts; but that must be a consideration for the future. When I get

strong, I shall delight in improving myself in sculpture."

"My love, that is the last thing I am anxious about," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick. "You do already much more than most girls, and most grown women. Whatever study you have pursued, you know thoroughly."

"Yes, to a certain point; but how much I have before me. There is such a pleasure in acquiring knowledge."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick was turning over her daughter's portfolio.

"Where is that beautiful drawing, Aveline, which I used to think your best? That part of the coast, near Sorrento, at low water."

"I have not kept it, mamma."

"Did you give it away, my dear?" asked Mrs. Fitzpatrick with a smile. For it was at Sorrento that Mr. Haveloc had been very much with them; and, during the progress of the drawing, as he was very fond of the art, and a pretty good draughts-

man himself, he had often interfered, greatly to the benefit of the picture, as Aveline then declared.

"No, mamma," said Aveline, after a pause.

"Have you lost it then?" asked Mrs. Fitzpatrick, thinking it not unlikely that Mr. Haveloc might have stolen it as a remembrance of the hours they had passed together.

"No, mamma," said Aveline speaking very distinctly, but with much effort. "I destroyed it."

"And why, dearest?"

"I thought it wisest, mamma," said Aveline, going rapidly on with her drawing.

"Dear Aveline," said her mother, taking her in her arms. "Now that we are at home, and at rest—are you unhappy?"

"No, no, indeed, mamma!" said Aveline, hiding her face upon her mother's shoulder. "Not unhappy! Nobody can tell but myself how deeply I have longed for home and

rest; often, when I have thought I should never rest again."

"But how was that, my Aveline?"

"It was not that I did not despise myself every day and every hour for my folly," said Aveline, plunging at once into the confession that she had often longed to make. "It was no cherished weakness, you will believe that, mamma."

"I do, my dear."

"And it was not because he defended us from the brigands. I know it is common enough for men to be brave. But then he thought so little of it—he always made so light of it; and we should have never known he had been wounded, if his man had not told our courier, when we met at Sorrento."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick pressed her daughter's hand.

"And then seeing him day by day at Sorrento; although he never said any thing that might lead me to think he noticed me more than a sick child. Always so kind—

more than attentive; so vigilant that I should not be fatigued. So active in choosing resting places for us on the shore, and finding views for sketching; and I watching every time he spoke for some word that might show I was as much treasured in his secret heart, as he was in mine;—it was almost too hard. Oh! how glad I was when he left Sorrento. And yet it seemed so dreary that I was glad to go too. Then, I had nothing to do but to forget all that was past; and that was hard. There was that drawing—he had helped me with the sky, and most of the distance. I destroyed that, when I found myself always looking at it; and the cornelian amulet, that he used to laugh at me for wearing. I gave it to Mrs. Maxwell Dorset, you remember."

"Mrs. Maxwell Dorset said that he had made her acquaintance at Florence, did she not?" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, anxious to lead her daughter to talk of this, as of an indifferent subject.

"Yes," she said, "he was a great pet

of hers. He gave her that bracelet of purple enamel with the diamond head. I should be very sorry to be ungrateful mamma, but I thought—"

"What, my dearest?"

"I thought a woman should be very old, to talk as she used to do about Mr. Haveloc and Mr. Leslie. I saw a great deal of her you know, when you were out arranging our journey home with Johannot."

"I should be sorry to see you imitate that, or any other freedom of manner," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "because I consider it very ungraceful; but I am persuaded that with Mrs. Maxwell Dorset, it was only manner. Mr. Leslie you know was a clergyman, and Mrs. Maxwell says she never likes to be without the intimate acquaintance of a clergyman. She considers it so advantageous both for herself; and for her children. Mr. Leslie came twice a week to explain the bible to her girls."

This was true enough; but Aveline remembered that Mrs. Maxwell Dorset's

remarks about Mr. Leslie, who was really a most excellent and earnest young man in the discharge of his duty, had been confined to repeated eulogiums upon his teeth, and his hands, and had never touched upon the doctrines which he wished to inculcate.

She said, however, that Mrs. Maxwell Dorset had been most kind to them when they most needed it; and that she should be very sorry to form a harsh judgment of her foibles. And then having talked too long upon subjects of an exciting nature, she brought on a severe fit of coughing, which Mrs. Fitzpatrick attributed to her having bent so much over her drawing.

"It is very odd we cannot get rid of that cough of yours, Aveline," she said. "Here comes Mr. Lindsay, we must consult with him about it."

Aveline was flushed with coughing, and her eyes sparkled with pleasure at the sight of her great favourite, Mr. Lindsay; so that when he dismounted, and came in at the open window, he could hardly be

expected to detect through the eagerness of her warm welcome, any strong trace of indisposition.

"Nothing the matter with you, I see!" were his first words to her.

"Indeed, there is, Mr. Lindsay," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick. "There is still something left for you to do with her. She cannot be quite right with that troublesome cough." And Mrs. Fitzpatrick fixed her black eyes upon Mr. Lindsay's immoveable countenance, with a scrutiny that it was not easy to avoid.

"I wish you would not feel my pulse, doctor," said Aveline, using a term she often playfully applied to Mr. Lindsay. "It always makes me faint."

"There then," said he removing his fingers, "you have not left any of your fancies behind you. I wish you had, or your cough!"

"You despise foreigners almost as much as Mrs. Grant," said Aveline laughing; "but

you cannot deny that I have gained a great deal by my absence."

"Gained. Yes; an inch or more. Were you not tall enough before you went?" said Mr. Lindsay, surveying her from head to foot.

"You are as tiresome as ever," said Aveline. "I have gained strength, spirits, and appetite!"

"What did you eat for breakfast?" asked Mr. Lindsay suddenly.

"Oh! breakfast. That is never a good meal with me. I could eat half a chicken for dinner," said Aveline, still laughing.

"Well, I suppose you want me to send you some medicine," said Mr. Lindsay, taking up his hat; "people are never contented without it, whether they need it or not."

"But do I not need it?" asked Aveline.

"No."

"What shall I take for my cough then?"

"Cherries, shrimps, tamarinds, whatever you like."

"And why are you running away?"

"Because I am going to see a woman who really wants me and my physic."

"Anybody I know?"

"A Mrs. Brand. I cannot tell how far your circle of acquaintance may extend."

"To be sure I know her. Brand's wife mamma! She is always sickly. Do you think her worse?"

"Why, yes—rather."

"And will she get well?"

"Perhaps. I am doubtful about it."

"Oh, dear! with all those poor little children."

"She would be much more likely to get well without the poor little children."

"And what could we send her that would be of use?"

"Chicken broth, port wine, brandy, if she could keep it from her husband."

"Oh, yes! he is a very good man. He never drinks."

"Excellent. Good bye to you," and the doctor stepped out upon the terrace. Mrs. Fitzpatrick followed him.

"What do you think of her, Mr. Lindsay?" she asked.

"I hardly know yet. I am not quite satisfied with her pulse; but I must see her when she has recovered the fatigue of her journey."

"And have you no advice to give me in the meantime?"

"Care—care—care. You know my axiom," said the doctor as he mounted horse. "A better one I warrant, than that Demosthenes."

"But you are really oracular this morning

"Keep her mind quiet," said Mr. Lin

the bridle, "and if she cri

Yes, it was very pleasant to be told that he must keep her daughter's mind quiet, when she had just learned that Aveline was engaged in one long hopeless struggle against an attachment that had never been declared, or sought, or requited.

It had often crossed her mind at Sorrento, that Mr. Haveloc must admire her daughter; but she had never alluded to the subject, even in jest; because hers was a mind to treat all grave matters gravely; and because she did not think it very conducive to the delicacy of a young girl to jest with her upon the impression she might have made upon a man, particularly while the fact was yet uncertain. And she believed that Aveline never gave him a thought; nor did she herself, farther than she need, take any trouble to keep them out of each other's way, because there would be no reason to object to it, if they should take a fancy to each other.

How deeply she repented of her blindness; how bitterly she recalled the frequent morn-

ing walks, the sketching, the sailing parties; from which, indeed, she could hardly have excluded Mr. Haveloc, all things considered; but from which she might have contrived to omit Aveline. She gazed down the rough pathway from which Mr. Lindsay had long vanished, and again repeated to herself, "Keep her mind quiet!"

CHAPTER IV.

They ben so well thewed and so wise
Whatever that good old man bespake.

SPENSER.

Might'st thou perceive austerely in his eye
That he did plead in earnest, yea or no?
Look'd he, or red, or pale, or sad, or merrily?
What observation mad'st thou in this case.

SHAKESPEARE.

NOTHING more endeared Margaret to her uncle, than the manner in which she took Mr. Haveloc's departure.

A little more grave, a little more silent than usual, she seemed only solicitous that Mr. Grey should not miss his companionship more than could be helped. She had not an instant's fear that his affection would undergo any change; her regrets at parting

with him were unmixed with doubt for the future; they were simply those of separating for so long from a person whom she loved.

One evening, when she was leaning upon Mr. Grey's arm-chair, placed as usual at the window, with the moonlight streaming over the grounds, much as when she had taken her last walk upon the terrace with Mr. Haveloc, her uncle seemed to think he might touch upon the subject without exciting her feelings too painfully.

"You are thinking of Claude, my love," said he taking her hand which rested on the back of his chair, and drawing it down over his shoulder.

"Yes uncle," said Margaret.

"Very natural," returned Mr. Grey. "I dare say he is thinking of you."

"I think he is," replied Margaret quietly.

"He agreed not to write to you, you know, my dear," said her uncle; "but I promised him one thing which might look

ike an infringement of our compact. If ny health should become materially worse, ı letter directed to Tynebrook will be for- varded to him, wherever he may be, and he vill come to us immediately; so that if I should be too ill to write, Margaret, you will know what to do. It is right if you ıre deprived of one protector, that I should procure you another."

"Oh! uncle, if you would not talk—if you would not imagine such things," said Margaret, melting into tears.

"Well, my dear child, I will not say any nore about it; we will change the subject. What do you think? The last night Claude vas with me, I told him that it was my in- ention to leave my estate, with some few eservations, to you. Well—but don't cry ıt that, my child: I never heard that any nan died the sooner for making his will. But Claude decidedly opposed my inten- ion; he said, his own fortune was so ample as to make so large an addition to it quite unnecessary; that he disapproved the plan

of heaping up those immense properties; that my estate would be the means of making some other relative easy in his circumstances; and that he thought he was speaking your sentiments as well as his own, when he resolutely declined my offer."

"Quite. He understands me," whispered Margaret through her tears.

"So then, Margaret, if he stands the test of time, you may be very happy together," said Mr. Grey.

"If!—oh, uncle! I have not a doubt."

"Do not have," said Mr. Grey. "Trust always, my child; but here comes the urn, and Casement too, I declare."

"Hollo! little woman, where's Master Claude?" was Mr. Casement's first salutation, after he had carefully peeped on each side of the urn, as if in search of the missing gentleman.

"Gone, Sir; several days ago," said Margaret, pursuing her occupation.

"Gone, eh? And where?"

"I don't know, Sir."

"Not in his confidence then, it seems."

"Think of that, Mr. Casement," said Margaret, looking up with an arch laugh.

"How was it?" asked Mr. Casement, dragging his chair as close to hers as possible, "tell me all about it. Did Master Grey cut up rough?"

Margaret looked puzzled, for she did not understand the phrase employed; but she turned to her uncle.

"Did you, Uncle Grey?" she said.

"He does not know what he is talking about, my dear," said Mr. Grey.

"Don't I?" said Mr. Casement. "You thought, little woman, that I did not know any of your proceedings with Master Hubert."

"I did not think about it, Sir," said Margaret, turning away.

"I suppose Elizabeth Gage has quite cut you now?" pursued Mr. Casement.

"No, she has not, Sir; for I dine at Chirke Weston to-morrow."

"Then give my love to her," said Mr.

Casement; "and tell her that I have held her engaged to me for the last ten years. I don't know when I shall claim her, but it is as well to remind her occasionally."

When she arrived at Captain Gage's next day, Elizabeth was alone in the drawing-room, dressed with her usual costly simplicity.

She was seated reading in an arm-chair by the open window, and Margaret could not help being newly struck with the grand and statuesque style of her beauty. From her height, the calm regularity of her features, the plain arrangement of her abundant hair, and the dignity of her attitude, she might have served as a model for Minerva.

Elizabeth's welcome was as warm as ever.

"You will find my father in a great bustle," said she, as soon as Margaret was seated. "Sir Philip d'Eyncourt has arrived. You have heard of him?"

"Yes; I have heard his name," said Margaret.

"He has come home in very bad health," said Elizabeth, "and has been obliged to abandon a survey which he considered of great importance, and for which he was peculiarly fitted from his scientific knowledge. My father quite enjoys the idea of having somebody to take care of. He pets *me*; but I never have anything the matter with me."

Captain Gage now came into the room, shook hands with Margaret, and assured her that she was looking remarkably well; and then told his daughter that Sir Philip would be down presently; that he had insisted on their not delaying dinner: that he was looking very ill, but that Bessy must not judge of him from his present appearance. And then he hurried out again to see how his guest was getting on.

Elizabeth Gage had not seen Sir Philip d'Eyncourt since she was a child. She re-

membered then that he had taken great notice of her, as young men are apt to do of handsome children. But her impressions of him, dated not from the scanty recollections she entertained of himself, but from the very high opinion that her father always expressed of his talents and character.

Her father never threw away his praise; therefore, Sir Philip must be everything that was admirable.

She wished very much to see him, and become acquainted with him, but she recognised him completely as her father's guest; and though she would gladly have shown her respect for his character, by contributing in any way to his comfort, yet she thought that as an invalid, and, in some respects, a disappointed man, the most agreeable thing for him was to be let alone.

"I am quite anxious to see him after so many years," said Elizabeth, turning slightly towards the door as her father and his guest entered.

Sir Philip was tall and dark; with a head like the portraits in Elizabeth's reign. Wide across the brows, and narrow at the chin. He was very grave and quiet in his manner; seemed in wretched health; sat down without speaking, after having bowed to the two ladies, and remained perfectly still and silent in a corner of the sofa.

"You can hardly recollect Bessy, I suppose," said Captain Gage, turning to Sir Philip.

"No; it is so many years since I had the pleasure of seeing Miss Gage," said he, turning his eyes in the direction of Elizabeth, who was showing Margaret some specimens of carved ivory at a table.

She coloured a little; but she reflected that there was nothing to wonder at in his memory being worse than her own. He had seen many pretty children; she had seen but one Sir Philip d'Eyncourt.

"Do you think Bessy like Hubert" asked Captain Gage, who seemed resolved

not to let Sir Philip alone on the subject of his daughter.

Sir Philip did not see the likeness.

"Now that vexes me, Sir Philip," said Elizabeth, looking up with her usual candour. "I am very fond of being considered like Hubert."

Sir Philip smiled, but made no reply.

"You think so, do you not?" asked Captain Gage of Margaret, with a mischievous smile.

This was rather hard upon her; she blushed very deeply, and assented.

Captain Gage enjoyed her confusion. He was as kind to her as ever: he would have liked her to marry Hubert, because his son had set his heart upon it; and he was very well pleased that it had come to nothing, because he thought the boy a great deal too young to think of settling. It would, indeed, have been difficult to disturb his equanimity. In the days of George's extravagance, he paid his bills with a com-

posure that made that gentleman's intimate friends wish that Heaven had provided them with father's exactly on the same pattern; and he took all Hubert's perverseness, after the first irritation, with the greatest forbearance; only begging that he might be informed when it was his pleasure to go to sea again, as he did not wish a second time to exert his influence for nothing.

Dinner was announced; Captain Gage took possession of Margaret, and Elizabeth knowing that Sir Philip must offer her his arm, with a slight colour, a slight embarrassment that became her infinitely, went towards him to save him the exertion of crossing to her side of the room. He met her with a smile that seemed at once to comprehend, and to be grateful for her consideration.

The thing that Captain Gage most ardently desired on earth was the marriage of Elizabeth with Sir Philip; but this wish he very prudently kept to himself. He

was very glad to see that she had on her cameos and her white silk, and that her hair was dressed to admiration; for the rest, it might, he thought, be safely left to time.

"I should like you to see Creswick," said Captain Gage, "it is for sale; if you would buy it, we should be sure of a pleasant neighbour. I will drive you over there to-morrow."

"Thank you," said Sir Philip, "it would be an inducement; but I believe I must content myself with Sherleigh."

"Sherleigh, is magnificent I know;" said Captain Gage, "but Creswick would be just the thing for a shooting-box. Are you fond of shooting? Oh! I recollect having many a day's sport with you in Antigua."

"Parrot shooting;" said Sir Philip, "there was no great skill required there. No; I have outlived my taste for field sports."

"You had only to fire into a tree, and they came down like cock-chaffers," said Captain Gage, turning to Margaret. "Why Bessy, what makes you in such a hurry?"

izabeth rose to leave the room ; and
ı her father joined her in the drawing-
ı, he brought a civil message from
Philip, that he regretted not seeing
Gage again, but that his physician
ɜnjoined him to retire early.

CHAPTER V.

But good with ill, and pleasure still with pain
Like Heaven's revolving signs, alternate reign.

TRACHINIA.

Life of my love—throne where my glories sit,
I ride in triumph on a silver cloud
When I but see thee.

SUN'S DARLING.

A FEW days after their return home, the weather, always so unsettled in our climate, became suddenly cold, and Aveline's illness immedately assumed a more serious form. Mr. Lindsay looked grave; and to Mrs. Fitzpatrick's repeated entreaties that he would be perfectly open with her respecting her daughter's state; he at length reluctantly owned that he entertained a very slight hope of her ever being restored to health.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick bore the news with more firmness than he had expected. Although her fears had often suggested as much to her own mind, she only half believed it. If Aveline seemed languid or out of spirits; if her cheek was more flushed, or her appetite failed, then Mrs. Fitzpatrick's heart died within her; and she echoed the doctor's unfavourable sentence. But if she rallied for a time, if she turned to her usual occupations for an hour, or if, owing to the return of the fine weather, she enjoyed a temporary respite from her harrassing attacks of cough, then Mrs. Fitzpatrick's spirits and confidence rose again; no one understood she was sure, her daughter's case. Aveline was certain to recover.

It was a mild sunny morning. There had been rain, and it had dispelled the sharp wind so prevalent in our early summer. The sea lay glittering, and breaking into small crested waves. Aveline wrapped in shawls with a heavy cloak laid over her

feet, sat reading upon the beach. Her mother had walked back to the house to give some forgotten order to the servants, and Aveline, as soon as Mrs. Fitzpatrick was out of sight, dropped her book, and clasping her hands on her knee, sat long gazing upon the moving line of water. It had become an exertion to her to read of late. The lines swam before her eyes, if she directed her attention to them for any length of time. Her appetite had declined; her spirits failed her; and her large eyes now filled with tears, as she remained listless, and quiet; gazing vacantly upon the slowly advancing waves.

Two or three merry peasant children were playing on the beach—urging each other closer and closer to the rippling water, and running back with shouts and laughter as the foam broke over their feet. When they came nearer to Aveline, their voices sank; they whispered to each other that it was the sick lady, and stole quietly one by one along the sand. But Aveline caught

sight of them as they were passing, and beckoned them to her side.

"Come to me, Jane," said she "I wish to speak to you, I want to hear how your mother does?"

"Mother is better, Ma'am, thank you," said the girl. "Mother ate all the chicken broth;" said a younger child pressing forward.

"I am glad to hear it," said Aveline, "does she sleep better, than she used?"

"Much better, Ma'am," said the girl, "the doctor says she may leave off taking the stuff at night."

"That is a good sign; and I hope you are very good children, and do nothing that might vex your mother; and that you try to help her as much as you can. It is so sad to be ill," said poor Aveline.

"Yes, Ma'am," said all the children together.

"It is such a comfort to her to have good little quiet children about her," said Aveline, in her gentle voice, "and it will be such

a comfort to you to know that you have done all in your power to make her better."

Her earnest manner struck the children; they stood silent, looking stedfastly at her. At last Jane, the eldest, said timidly, "And you, Ma'am, are you getting better?"

"No," said Aveline with a faint smile "no, I do not feel much better yet. I think I must wait until the weather is warmer."

And she drew her shawl closer round her.

"Mother will be sorry for that," said the little girl sadly; "mother said she did not look to see you ever better in this world."

"And mother cried when she said so," added the boy fixing his round blue eyes on Aveline.

Aveline made no answer, when the children had done speaking, and they stood by her side, constrained and silent for some minutes.

"At last she looked up, and said quietly." "Well now, you can go on playing.

will be very careful of her two
ıers. It is quite like a woman to be
ed—is it not Jane?"
ıe children stole gently away hand in
.; and Aveline, after a pause, during
h she struggled in vain to calm her
ıgs, burst into a passion of tears and
ulsive sobs. Her mother had so care-
concealed from her all suspicions of
ıanger; so scrupulously hidden her fears
ıe result of her illness; that Aveline
ys looked forward to the warm weather
he infallible cure for her cough, and
bed to accidental causes the different
ɔtoms which revealed too well to others
ıature of her complaint. To die. The
ghts was so new — so terrible. To
ɜ the world—she was so full of genius,
ıtellectual life, she had done so much,
ıad so much to do, (the feeling of all
ɜ who have done much), and to leave her
ıer—who had no one—no single thing
fe to supply her place. Could it be?
d nothing really save her? Was her

fate so plainly indicated, that the poor old peasant woman, whom she visited and relieved, could not fail to read it? Her agitation shook her from head to foot. And yet another thought would intrude itself; a memory and a hope that she had banished, yet clung to in spite of reason, for very long. "If I die," she exclaimed, clasping her hands in agony, "I shall never see him again!"

After a while she collected herself; she would not distress her mother by appearing conscious of her perilous state. And her mother was suppressing all that she feared and felt, from the same kind but mistaken motive; for both would have been relieved and strengthened had they opened their hearts, and wept together instead of in secret.

"Well, Aveline, are you tired," asked Mrs. Fitzpatrick, as she returned to her daughter.

"Rather tired, mamma, of sitting," said Aveline in that unequal voice that be-

rays recent tears; "if you will give me your arm, I will walk a little way along the beach.

"There is not much sand left," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, as they strolled along, "the sea is a sad encroacher, Aveline, and stays for you no more than for King Knute."

But Aveline was weeping silently, and made no reply.

"Aveline, dearest, what is it?" asked Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and her heart trembled within her, for of all things she most dreaded her daughter's suspecting her danger; she knew the rapid inroads of imagination upon a delicate frame.

"Nothing, mamma," said Aveline. "I am low spirited to day, and do not feel strong enough to resist crying—that is all."

"You must not be so much alone," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "have you seen Brand's children?"

"Yes, they have just left me;" said Aveline, "they are nice little creatures, and Jane grows taller I think every day."

"Mrs. Fletcher has sent you a basket of her fine raspberries," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "and a very kind note with them."

"She is very good. I meet every where with great kindness," said Aveline.

"You must take care we do not walk too far," said her mother, "suppose you rest a little."

"I will stand a minute, and watch the sea, mamma," said Aveline.

She leaned on her mother, and remained gazing on the long range of broken rocks against which the waves were tossing their white foam. These rocks, which a little way out at sea, rose some feet above the level of the water, decreased in size as they advanced to the shore, and appeared nothing more than an irregular mass of rough stones, covered with slippery green sea-weed.

Presently a speck appeared on the horizon, and gradually advancing, presented the appearance of some slender vessel.

"Look, Aveline, there is a yacht!" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "what a beautiful thing it is!"

"Yes, a pretty toy," returned Aveline listlessly, "but I prefer a fishing boat, I think my sympathies go rather with the poor, than with the rich. What tales of the still magnificence of moonlight nights, what adventures, what perils of winds and storms are connected with the meanest of those little vessels. And the watchful wife, and the sleeping unconscious children, during those rough dark nights, while the father is out toiling for their bread. I do not like the gentry of our day, mamma; all the poetry is on the side of these poor folks."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick smiled, "See," she said, "they have lowered a boat; one of your despised gentlefolks is coming ashore."

Aveline turned her eyes carelessly in the direction of the boat. "I dare say," she replied, "it belongs to the person who has taken the villa on the other side of the cliff. Mark said it had been let the other

day. It would be a very convenient place for any one fond of boating." The boat, at length, neared the shore, and a man in sailor's costume sitting idly in the stern threw out a couple of dogs, who swam towards the land.

Aveline, not sufficiently interested in their proceedings to continue watching them, turned slowly away, and loitered along the shore in an opposite direction.

Meantime the dogs had come to land, and one of these, a setter of remarkable beauty after shaking the spray from his coat, ran prying along the shore, until upon reaching Aveline and her mother, he uttered a bark of recognition, and sprang fawning upon them.

"Mamma!" exclaimed Aveline breathless with excitement, "look; it is Farfallo How well I recollect him. See, he knows me Don't you remember my naming him at Sorrento? Oh, I cannot be mistaken!"

"Dear Aveline, it is very unlikely," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick."

"No! I am sure—certain of it," cried Aveline, "how could I forget him?"

Her agitation, the glow in her cheeks, the light in her eyes, as she stooped and caressed the dog with a delight that she took no pains to disguise, gave a hope to Mrs. Fitzpatrick that sent a thrill of pleasure through her heart. It was evident that Farfallo's master could not be far off. It was equally evident that Aveline had not forgotten him; all her illness might arise merely from depression of spirits, from that protracted hope, which while it makes sick the heart, seldom altogether spares the body. Doctors did make such extraordinary mistakes in people's complaints. Mr. Lindsay, though a very judicious man, was not infallible; and Mr. Haveloc once more thrown in Aveline's way.

Her fancy was travelling very fast, when a voice, they both well knew, was heard calling Farfallo, coupled with a polite request, not proffered in the gentlest

tones, that "the devil would fetch the dog."

Some rocks were between them and the impatient owner. Farfallo sprang away. Aveline stood up with a bright smile.

"So like him—so impatient!" she said, as if she were paying him a compliment. He came suddenly upon them.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick turned quietly towards him, as if they had only parted yesterday.

"We were to blame, Mr. Haveloc. We kept your dog," said she smiling.

He stopped short in astonishment.

"Mrs. Fitzpatrick! Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "How fortunate I esteem myself in meeting you again."

"The surprise is all on your side," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick. "This dog of yours warned us of your near neighbourhood."

"You remembered him then? I hope he has not bored you—he is so wet. And you, Miss Fitzpatrick, I trust you are quite recovered."

Aveline made a slight bow, and smiled. Mrs. Fitzpatrick answered for her.

"We have not much to boast of, at present, Mr. Haveloc," said she; "we look to the hot weather to set her up again."

"You must allow me to take you a cruise in my yacht," said Mr. Haveloc pointing to the vessel in the distance. "Sea voyages are said to be very good for invalids; and I am becoming quite an experienced sailor."

"You used to threaten something of that kind at Sorrento," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Yes! but the fancy has gone off as you said it would," he replied. "I shall get rid of my yacht in the autumn, and go abroad again."

"What not tired of travelling yet!" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"It is not exactly the love of travelling; but I have promised a friend of mine to go with him to the Pyrenees—a young barrister, who has a few weeks of liberty in the

autumn, and who likes to use it to the utmost."

"What a delightful tour!" said Aveline. "There is nothing equal to mountain scenery."

"But you know, Miss Fitzpatrick, I am not properly sensible of the charms of mountain scenery."

"That is very wrong," said Aveline, looking up to him with a smile. "I was in hopes you might have reformed before now."

"There were three things I remember that I did not justly appreciate," said Mr. Haveloc; "moonlight, monks, and mountains."

"It was only that one old monk that I ever insisted upon," said Adeline.

"I thought him the dirtiest of the whole set," said Mr. Haveloc laughing.

"He was very dirty," observed Miss Fitzpatrick. "You cannot think how surprised I was to see you."

"I thought you in Italy," said Mr. Haveloc.

"I thought you still farther," replied Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Indeed! How far?"

"In Egypt. Was not that your plan?"

"I had some thoughts of going across to Venice, and so on to Egypt; but I became anxious to return to England."

"I hope you found your guardian in good health."

"Oh! I hope so," echoed Aveline. "He must be such a delightful old man."

"He is delightful," said Mr. Haveloc warmly. "But I cannot say much for his health; yet these sickly people often outlive stronger ones."

"That is very true," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, with a satisfied air.

As they passed the place where Aveline had been sitting, Mr. Haveloc started forward and picked up a book.

"This is yours, Miss Fitzpatrick," he

said, "do not deny it—now that I am your neighbour, I shall make a point of gleaning after you, and furnish my library with the books you lose."

"You have taken that villa then," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, smiling at Aveline's confusion, for she was rather notorious for losing her things.

"I have. So you have been reading the dark old Florentine, again," said Mr. Haveloc, looking into the book he carried, "I thought, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, you forbade the Dante altogether."

"Not quite," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick; "but I was rather an advocate at Sorrento for studies of a lighter description. Aveline's health—"

"Oh, but I am better now, mamma!" exclaimed Aveline.

"You do, indeed, look better, Miss Fitzpatrick, than when I saw you last," said Mr. Haveloc.

"You think so—you really think so!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzpatrick eagerly, "and

you must be a judge. I, who see her every day, can form no idea of her looks."

"Can there be a doubt of it?" said Mr. Haveloc.

And who, indeed, would have traced the progress of disease in those sparkling eyes —that beautiful bloom. Her walk was no longer stooping; her step was not languid. Her mother was astonished at the renovation that seemed to have taken place within her, though she was enlightened as to the cause. And Aveline, the thought of her danger had vanished like lightning from her mind. She was well, strong, happy, she could never be ill again.

"And how long are we likely to have you for our neighbour, Mr. Haveloc?" asked Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"I have taken the villa for the summer," he said; "but if it pleases me, perhaps, I shall buy it. I should like to have something of a fishing cottage by the sea-side; and though the house is a nut-shell, it is

large enough for that purpose. One pu[illegible]ts up with any accommodation at the sea."

"And a single man ought to put up wi[illegible]th a cupboard, you know," said Aveline.

"Ah! Miss Fitzpatrick, I am aware [illegible] of the immense dignity a man gains when [illegible]ne is married," said Mr. Haveloc; "befo[illegible]re that awful period, he is hardly looked upo[illegible]n as a member of society. Is this yo[illegible]ur house? What a paradise. Allow me [illegible] to return you your Dante, and do me t[illegible]he honour to recollect that I rescued the o[illegible]ld bard from the waves."

"No—you must come in, Mr. Haveloc[illegible]," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "I cannot part [illegible] so quickly from an old friend. We dine ear[illegible]ly on Aveline's account, and you can tak[illegible]ke your luncheon at the same time."

"I shall be too happy to come in," sai[illegible]id Mr. Haveloc, "for luncheon, I disdain [illegible] it altogether, as most men do."

"I believe you never eat, Mr. Haveloc[illegible]," said Aveline, "you never did. People ta[illegible]lk

of ladies living on air; I never could make out what you lived upon at Sorrento."

"Turkies, I believe, Miss Fitzpatrick; they were the staple commodity in that part of the world. I do not wonder that you were anxious to return to England," he said, looking round, as they entered the drawing-room. "The wonder is, how you could ever leave so delightful a spot."

"One would go anywhere in search of health, Mr. Haveloc," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"True, but having found it, as I trust you have," said Mr. Haveloc, turning to Aveline, "you cannot regret the shores of the Mediterranean, here."

"No—I regret nothing, I have not a thing to wish for," said Aveline, as she sat tranquilly on the sofa, absorbed in the content of the present moment. He was with them; he was their near neighbour; they must often see him. Her happiness was only too great to be believed. She never dreamed that his heart was

engrossed by another—she judged him [illegible]y herself.

For Mr. Haveloc, he was really delighte[illegible]d at the rencontre. He was very partial to Mr[illegible]s. Fitzpatrick: he respected her characte[illegible]r, and admired the cultivation of her min[illegible]d. They had been used, when they met a[illegible]t Sorrento, to hold long arguments on ar[illegible]rt and poetry; on society and politics; or[illegible]n every possible topic; in short, both ha[illegible]d much knowledge, much originality, muc[illegible]ch power of expression. And Aveline sat an[illegible]d listened as to an oracle. But with th[illegible]he exception of a few bantering sentence[illegible]es occasionally passing between them, the[illegible]ey never spoke to each other. And while h[illegible]he sought and admired the society of Mr[illegible]rs. Fitzpatrick, he only thought of Aveline a[illegible] as an interesting, sickly girl, whom he hope[illegible]ed would gain strength for the sake of he[illegible]er poor mother, who seemed to doat upo[illegible]on her. But although he was not what woul[illegible]ld be called a good-natured person, yet whe[illegible]re his feelings were at all interested, [illegible] *he*

played an eager and watchful attention, ich might easily be supposed to spring n a warmer source than that which nated his conduct.

Aveline had taken off her bonnet, and profuse curls of dark hair, of that st silk that almost bespeaks great cacy of constitution, hung over her face shoulders, concealing in some measure thinness of her outline. Mr. Haveloc not sufficiently interested in her to mark quick and unequal breathing; he ely thought as he had said, that she looking much better than she had done Sorrento.

"That is your harp, Miss Fitzpatrick," Mr. Haveloc, as he wandered about room. "Did you get any lessons from t person at Milan?"

"Mademoiselle S——; yes, a few. But as obliged to leave off on account of my st. She did me a great deal of good, ever, and brought out my touch very ."

"I hope to hear you one day. Oh! by the way, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, did you ever succeed in finding an engraving of the Cenci that pleased you?"

"No, but I picked up a miniature copy at Rome which almost satisfied me."

"Almost! Ah that inimitable mouth, the colour as well as the form, the faded rose-leaves; but one cannot describe it. A man who had painted such a picture had better die; there would be nothing left for him to do—he could not surpass himself."

"Now I think, Mr. Haveloc," said Aveline, with something of her old playfulness, "he had better live to be thanked and admired for his good deeds: and having excelled others, he need not be concerned that he can no longer surpass himself."

"And what are you doing, and who have you surpassed in the arts?" said Mr Haveloc, struck by her reply.

"Something wonderful is in progress," said Aveline laughing, "when I get better I mean to astonish everybody."

Mr. Haveloc was surprised and pleased with her conversation. Pain, whether mental or bodily, lulls the faculties of some people; but with others, it stings them into unnatural forwardness and activity. So it had been with Aveline. In accomplishment, in language, in general knowledge of every kind, she was singularly forward and perfected. Everything around her proclaimed the elegance of her mind; every trifle bore the stamp of that classic correctness of taste, which she had improved by travel, but which was a part of her natural tendencies.

When he rose to go, it was natural that Mrs. Fitzpatrick should beg him to repeat his visit; that she should assure him of being always a welcome guest.

"Thank you a thousand times," he replied, "you cannot imagine the pleasure I feel at renewing our acquaintance; but I cannot take myself off, until you consent to fix a day for our sailing expedition: do trust yourselves on board with me?"

"Come to-morrow," said Mrs. patrick, "I shall see how Aveline is, we will talk it over then."

"Be very well, Miss Fitzpatrick," Mr. Haveloc, as he shook hands with "as soon as I get you on board, I make all sail for Algiers."

This was an allusion to a laughing versation they had once held at Sorr respecting the price they would all f if seized upon by some pirate of Mediterranean, and carried to the s market at Algiers. It was clear tha remembered all that had ever passed v they were together. Was it wonderf she thought that love had prompted memory ?

There was a silence of some mom after he left the room, and Mrs. I patrick, who was seated near the win watching Mr. Haveloc as he made his down to the beach, said :

"What a curious sort of straw hat wears."

"'Does he?" said Aveline, coming near her mother.

"'Yes, like the reapers in the 'Tempest.'"

And that was all that passed between them on the subject of Mr. Haveloc's visit.

CHAPTER VI.

Lieben Freunde! Es gab schön're Zeiten
Als die unsern—das ist nicht zu streiten!
Und ein edler Volk hat einst gelebt.
Könnte die Geschichte davon schweigen
Tausend Steine würden redend zeugen
Die man aus dem Schooss der Erde gräbt.
Doch es ist dahin, es ist verschwunden,
Dieses hochbegünstigste Geschlecht;
Wir, wir leben! Unser sind die Stunden,
Und der Lebende hat Recht.

SCHILLER.

"And so you wish you were a pirate, Miss Fitzpatrick," said Mr. Haveloc, as they stood on the deck of his yacht. "I commend your taste. These pirates were pretty fellows in rhyme."

"It would be rather late in the day to

ımmence Viking, would it not?" said rs. Fitzpatrick.

"Oh no!" said Mr. Haveloc; "my yacht quite at Miss Fitzpatrick's service. I ı not despair of her making prize of some ılitary fishing boat on a dark night. nd only think, Miss Fitzpatrick, how :cellent the herrings would taste, that ıu had come by in so meritorious a ay."

"I wished to be descended from a ırate," said Aveline, "don't you perceive ıe amazing difference?"

"Oh, very great! You wish for all ıeir propensities, without the power to ıt them in practice."

"After all, there were fine things done ı those Vikinger," said Aveline. "They ad courage."

"Oh, courage! that is born with a ıan; if he has it not, it is a deformity, ɔt a vice. Just as if he were born without nose."

"You would respect courage more, Mr. Haveloc," said Aveline, "if you knew what fear was."

"I never had such a compliment paid me before," said Mr. Haveloc, laughing.

"We have a right to pay you compliments, you know," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who was seated a little apart, with a book in her hand. "But you do not stand up for the water thieves, or land thieves either."

"He pretends to have no enthusiasm," said Aveline, smiling

"On the contrary," said Mr. Haveloc, "I admit that time mellows the proceedings of such gentry; and I own to an enthusiastic desire to see them treated as they deserve."

"I was very glad, Miss Fitzpatrick, when our Calabrian friends were duly sent to the galleys."

"You could not have a prettier name for your yacht, 'the Ariel,'" said Aveline.

I am sure it is a beautiful craft, though I
n no judge of such things."

"The Ariel was christened before I had
r," said Mr. Haveloc. "If I meant to
ep her, I should take the liberty to
ange her name."

"And what would you call her?" asked
veline, with some curiosity.

Mr. Haveloc, hesitated a little, and then
id, "the Pearl."

"And I am very fond of pearls," said
eline. "How many things there are, Mr.
veloc, the very names of which recalls
ch that is beautiful in poetry to one's
mory. The Pearl, the violet, the lark."

"True enough," said Mr. Haveloc, "a
in is a prettier bird, but he has
t been so much be-rhymed. A pistol
a handier weapon than a sword, but it
uld make a sorry figure in a lyric."

"And a grand pianoforte," said Aveline,
ughing, "will never be appreciated with
ars and moonlight, like a lute."

"And a rascally pirate will be hung in chains, to the great delight of all sober people, while a horse Viking, or even a Spanish buccaneer, would be exalted in ballad, or blank verse."

"Allow," said Aveline, "that people cannot live *well*, who live only in the present time."

"And that people cannot live wisely, who live in the past or the future," said Mr. Haveloc.

"I do not know whether it is too serious an allusion," said Aveline; "but I cannot help recollecting that 'the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light.'"

Mr. Haveloc remained silent for some moments. "I wonder what that means exactly," said he, at last.

"It means, I think, to give some little comfort to the upright, when they find that all through their lives they are wronged and surpassed by those who are unscru-

pulous in their tools and weapons," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Cold comfort," said Mr. Haveloc, still musing.

"I think not so," replied Mrs. Fitzpatrick. "I think it is comfort enough if an honest man is told, on the highest authority—it will be so—you will not surpass—you will not be enriched—you will not be well spoken of, like your unprincipled neighbour—you will be deceived and impoverished by those who are more skilful than yourself, skilful in arts which your profession forbids you to use. If they are not told this, they might become restless and dissatisfied, and attribute to themselves some of the failure which belongs to the fact, that this world is the home of the wicked, but a strange land to the Christian pilgrim."

Mr. Haveloc, seemed much struck by her remarks, but remained silent.

"Mr. Lindsay, is an illustration of mamma's idea," said Aveline, "he is much

too honest ever to be rich. Plain dealing never answers with common minds; and I leave you to judge of the proportion of superior people that fall in the way of a country practitioner."

"You think with the old poet," said Mr. Haveloc.

> "The stars are not more distant from the earth,
> Than profit is from honesty!"

"That is very well said," remarked Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "whose is it?"

"Beaumont and Fletcher's," he replied.

"I wish you would read to us 'The Faithful Shepherdess,'" said Aveline, "you were to have done so at Sorrento, only you had not the Author with you."

"Willingly, if you are in the humour for it," said Mr. Haveloc; "but first, Miss Fitzpatrick, I must see you look a little more comfortable; I shall order up a heap of cushions, and install you like 'Lalla Rookh,' before I begin to read."

"Oh! what a Sybarite!" cried Aveline,

as he arranged a pile of red silk cushions for her upon the deck, "do look, mamma!"

"I am much obliged to Mr. Haveloc," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "and feel very little disposed to quarrel with his luxurious equipments, for really Aveline you do begin to look rather fagged."

"I hope he is clever, this country practitioner," said Mr. Haveloc, looking up suddenly from his task.

"Clever!" cried Aveline. "Mamma would be highly offended with any one else who should presume to call her Mr. Lindsay clever. He is a man of excellent judgment, Mr. Haveloc."

"I am glad of it," said Mr. Haveloc, "for your sake."

Aveline smiled and settled herself to listen.

The day was beautiful, the coast in the distance was reduced to a minature picture steeped in the most delicious and variegated tints. The air was hot and still, and nothing

interrupted the silence but the flapping of a sail, and the gentle sound of the water rising and falling slowly against the side of the vessel.

"We make but little way," said Mr. Haveloc.

"That does not matter. It is pleasant to lie at anchor. Suppose we were becalmed in the midst of the Pacific?" said Aveline.

"With one day's luncheon on board," said Mr. Haveloc.

"It is very pleasant to have run into some great danger, after it is all over," said Aveline.

"That makes the pleasure of horrid dreams," said Mr. Haveloc.

"But they are not distinct—real enough," said Aveline. "Every thing seems to happen through a ground-glass."

"One would think you took opium Miss Fitzpatrick," said Mr. Haveloc laughing.

"So she does, regularly," said Mrs. Fitz-

patrick, with an anxious look, and fixing her eyes upon his face.

He looked surprised and pained, opened the book hastily, and began to read.

Aveline was enchanted with 'the Faithful Shepherdess.' Half rising on her cushions, with cheeks flushed, and her large transparent eyes wide open, she feared to lose a single word.

"That is surely the brightest pastoral ever written," said she, as he laid down the book at the close of the first act.

"Do you like it better than 'Comus?'" he asked.

"I do not like to compare them," said Aveline. "But there seems so much less effort in Beaumont and Fletcher's verse. And what stately simplicity in the opening, —what richness in the lyrical movements! They seem to have been inspired by the tawney sun-shine of the Greek isles; while all the woodland scenery seems glittering with the fresh dew of an English summer's night."

"And then Milton's 'Comus' labours under the slight disadvantage of not being written first," said Mr. Haveloc.

"Ah! you mean to insinuate that he borrowed some of the ideas," said Aveline laughing.

"Oh! he never borrowed; his was high-way robbery, piracy, Miss Fitzpatrick."

"You do not like Milton, I see," said Aveline.

"No. All his feelings were violently personal. His Theory of Divorce was suggested by his sour discontent of his wife. His democracy by the party he espoused. His religion was the harsh bigotry of his faction, not that which improves the individual. And the much admired anecdote of knocking up his daughters in the night, to write his verses, appears to me the coolest instance of selfish vanity I can now recollect. Fancy, Miss Fitzpatrick, your being rudely aroused from some delicious dream to pen down the leaden stanzas of 'Paradise Regained.'"

"Mamma thinks you are talking treason," said Aveline.

"All the good that I know of him is, that when he had got hold of a wrong principle, he was consistent in holding it," continued Mr. Haveloc. "You know he persisted in rejecting the office that Charles the Second was so generous as to offer him."

"It was generous," said Aveline, "for Milton's poetry had not then received the stamp of time, and Charles was not compelled, by opinion, to be liberal to the author of 'Paradise Lost.'"

They continued conversing upon a variety of topics until it was time to take luncheon; and then Mr. Haveloc would not suffer Aveline to move. He brought up every thing upon the deck that he thought she could fancy, and waited upon her with the utmost care.

He was always morbidly affected by sickness. If he had a servant ill, nothing

could equal his kindness and attention; and therefore, it was not surprising that he should show so much solicitude to Aveline's comforts.

In the course of the afternoon, she began to feel very chilly. One shawl after another was wrapped round her without effect. Mr. Haveloc was alarmed, but Mrs. Fitzpatrick said it was always so about that time, and that it would pass away. But when it did pass away, Aveline was in such a state of exhaustion that she could scarcely move into the boat, which was lowered to take her to the shore. A fresh breeze had risen; it was rather a rough landing. The boat could not be got close enough to the jetty. Mr. Haveloc, after exchanging a few whispered words with Mrs. Fitzpatrick, sprang out, knee-deep in the water, took Aveline in his arms, and carried her not only to land, but across the shingles, and up the rocky pathway to their cottage, and placed her in safety on the sofa in the drawing-room

window, as Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who had been assisted, by the steward, came in at the glass-doors.

Aveline was very much shocked, but what could have been done? She was unable to walk, and the choice rested between Mr. Haveloc and the steward.

Mr. Haveloc began to make his apologies, but they both laughed before he had concluded them. He was earnest in pressing his further services upon the ladies—he wished to be made of use in fetching their medical man.

Aveline laughed, and assured him that she was no worse than usual. She hardly knew what Mr. Lindsay would say to her if she summoned him for nothing. He was very merciless to imaginary ailments.

He could scarcely conceal the mournful interest she inspired. So attenuated, so brilliant with feverish excitement. But assuming a gay air, he took up his hat, told Mrs. Fitzpatrick he should wait on her the

next morning, to learn whether she had forgiven him for tiring out her daughter and begged Aveline to put the best face she could upon the matter, lest Mrs. Fitzpatrick should put a stop to all excursions for the future.

CHAPTER VII.

He that would flee from suffering must die,
For life is suffering, and life's cure is death.
The earth, the sea, the radiant orb of day,
The star-bespangled sky, the moon's soft lustre,
These are all beautiful—the rest is fear
And sorrow; and if aught of good may seem
To bless thy lot, count it not happiness.

ÆSOP.

THE next morning, as early as he could well hope to be admitted, Mr. Haveloc made his way to Mrs. Fitzpatrick's, carrying with him a cluster of beautiful passion flowers. As he came up to the porch, a gentleman was mounting his horse to ride away, who looked like a medical man, and was, in fact, no other than Mr. Lindsay.

The good doctor cast a keen glance at Mr. Haveloc as he passed him, accompanied by a slight shake of the head, which might be supposed to mean, that if he came there as a suitor, his errand was in vain.

Mr. Haveloc not putting this interpretation upon the gesture, simply feared that Miss Fitzpatrick might be worse, rang the bell, was admitted, and entered.

Aveline was lying on the sofa, drawing upon a small stand placed on the table by her side. She extended her hand over the top of the stand to Mr. Haveloc, and assured him playfully that she had kept her word, and had told Mr. Lindsay no tales of her gay doings yesterday.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick shook hands with him in silence.

He went round to look at Aveline's drawing.

"Beautiful! Miss Fitzpatrick," he exclaimed; "how many strides have you made in art since you crossed the Alps?"

"Do you think so? Not so many,"

said Aveline, laying down her brush. "There is something wrong in the colouring of my sky. But those passion flowers; how splendid! Does your villa produce such treasures as these?"

"Will you come and see?" he said. "I do not know what Mrs. Fitzpatrick will say to my trying to entice you out again; but if you have really recovered your fatigue—"

"Perfectly," said Aveline; "in fact, I enjoyed myself so much that it quite counterbalanced the finale of the expedition."

"What do you say to it, Mrs. Fitzpatrick?" asked Mr. Haveloc, looking through his glass at Aveline's drawing. "A little indigo, I think, would set that sky all to rights."

"Do it for me," said Aveline," offering him a brush.

"It is a serious consideration," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, trying to appear cheerful.

"It will all wash off," said Mr. Haveloc, still going on with the sky.

"I meant the visit to your villa," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Oh! Miss Fitzpatrick, you have no idea what a singular little animal the owner of my fishing cottage has entailed upon me," said Mr. Haveloc. "I really think I shall buy him, and take him away with me. A Norwegian poney, as sagacious as a dog, and covered with long hair, that I can only compare to ragged tufts of grass."

"I want to see it," said Aveline.

She had been so used to have every wish gratified by her mother, that without being at all selfish, she almost took it for granted that every fancy she formed should be immediately fulfilled.

Mr. Haveloc was much amused by her manner.

"You shall see him whenever you please," he said. "Suppose I bring him here to-morrow, and you ride him to the fishing cottage."

"Oh, mamma! that would be nice," said Aveline.

"My predecessor had a great taste for gardening," said Mr. Haveloc. "His little green-house is absolutely hung with air-plants, and he has some water-plants of equal value and scarcity."

"Oh! but we must see the plants, mamma," said Aveline.

"I think not just yet," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick; "Aveline had better take a short ride first to try her powers, for the villa must be two miles off; and I hardly think her equal to the exertion."

"Oh! do send Mark for the poney, Mr. Haveloc," said Aveline, eagerly. "I will pay poor Mrs. Brand a visit; for it is so long since I have walked down that steep road. Ah! the morning after I came home; that was the last time I was able to take so long a walk."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick remained silent. Mr. Haveloc could see that she was unusually depressed that day about her daughter.

"I will go for him, myself," said Mr. Haveloc. "I think there is a side-saddle in the stable, but I hardly know what I am in possession of—for I have not my horses with me."

"But why not send Mark?" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Because I have nothing on earth to do," said Mr. Haveloc. "I shall see that the poney is cleaned. I shall find the saddle, which I know will not be found if I do not look for it, and bring him here in half the time that a servant would take about it."

"Oh! thank you," said Aveline.

"Mrs. Fitzpatrick looks half unwilling to trust me with you again," said Mr. Haveloc, as he rose.

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "my reluctance is simply to occasion you a walk in the heat, when my servant might so easily save you the trouble."

He came back before they had thought his return possible, and led the poney up

to the drawing-room window for Aveline's inspection.

She was delighted with it. The creature was well proportioned, with a sagacious eye, and a small head, half hidden beneath a forest of mane. His hair grew in abundant tufts, like withered grass, and very much of that colour; so that if horses are subject to the same illusions regarding their personal appearance that usually attend the human race, it is probable he imagined himself of snowy whiteness.

Aveline was anxious to set out directly; but Mrs. Fitzpatrick advised that as the sun was still very powerful, Mr. Haveloc should dine with them, and escort them out afterwards. He readily agreed to this arrangement, and spent the time until their early dinner in wandering about the pretty garden and shrubberies with Mrs. Fitzpatrick; while Aveline, reclining in a low chair by the window, had the pleasure of keeping him continually in sight.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick's dejection increased

when she was away from her daughter. She rarely spoke, and the few words she uttered were in that low, weak voice which is a sufficient indication, to the experienced of mental distress.

Mr. Haveloc opened upon the topic at once.

"I am truly sorry," he said, "to find that Miss Fitzpatrick is so little able to bear fatigue. I hope you really have reason to be perfectly satisfied with your medical adviser."

"Quite," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, turning to him her face as pale as death, "all that is possible has been done."

"Good Heaven! you do not mean—" he exclaimed, "you cannot so entirely—"

Mrs. Fitzpatrick shook her head. He seemed very much shocked; but it was clear to her that his manner was not that of a person who felt a shade of attachment to her daughter, or anything beyond the natural sympathy which the early fate of so interesting a creature must awaken. Know

ing, as she did, the too certain state of Aveline's health, she could scarcely regret that he was spared the misery of loving her daughter: her only wish was to keep him near her while she lived. In Aveline's weak condition, she was certain that she could not support the pain of being again separated from him; and she came to a resolution, at once dignified and singular. She determined to ask him to continue his visits as long as her daughter was capable of deriving satisfaction from them.

After a painful pause of a few moments, he himself renewed the subject.

"It is so natural you should be nervous;—so reasonable you should see her case in a more desponding light than any one else," he said; "you forget she has youth, repose, all the care that can be lavished upon the most delicate invalid; there are so many things in her favour."

"And do you not think," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "that I have said all this to myself

a thousand times. That I have prayed, struggled, hoped, till hope was vain?"

He looked greatly distressed; in reality much more so for Mrs. Fitzpatrick than for Aveline. He had a strong regard, a sincere friendship for the mother; for the daughter he merely felt the interest which her precarious health had recently awakened.

"But is there nothing," said he eagerly, "a different treatment, a warmer climate. Why not try Madeira? So many have derived benefit—"

"Because, in summer, no climate can surpass our own in this place," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "and Aveline will not live to be tried by another winter."

There was something shocking in her calmness. He looked at her as if not comprehending what she said.

"For all sorrow," she continued, as if answering some thought of her own, "it wears you out, or you wear it out, so there is an end either way; and a great end,

Mr. Haveloc, in the education of the soul. An end, so important, that we ought not to shrink so cowardly from the agony of the means."

"I wish earnestly it was in my power to offer you consolation, or relief," he said, "but this is a case in which words are idle."

"And yet there is one thing, Mr. Haveloc, which, if Aveline's fate were less certain, I could never propose to you. Your society is an amusement to her, and in sickness every enjoyment is so curtailed, that I dread for her the slightest deprivation. Can I ask you to devote some of your time to us while you remain in the neighbourhood; can I even ask that you should prolong your stay beyond what you might have originally intended. If she should linger—"

Her voice failed her.

"Most willingly, my dear Mrs. Fitzpatrick," he exclaimed with eagerness, "sickness admits of few alleviations. I should

be thankful, indeed, if I could afford any comfort to your daughter or yourself."

"You see how desperate I have become," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick with a smile, "to demand of you such a melancholy seclusion. You, whose wealth and position would make you so welcome, so caressed in general society. But all considerations give way to the approach of death."

"Good Heaven! Can you believe such a thought could have a moment's weight with me?" he said hastily, "is life a May game that we should only count the hours devoted to revelry and enjoyment? I esteem myself fortunate that I am able to be with you at a time of so much anxiety and distress."

"I thought this of you. I had every reason to think it," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, pressing the hand he extended to her, "stay, there is Aveline; what could induce her to come out?"

As she stood at the end of the narrow

shaded avenue beckoning to them, the soft fluttering of her white dress, and the shadowy outline of her figure seemed like a dim foreboding of the fate which awaited her. Mr. Haveloc hastened to her side.

"Are you coming to dinner, you two?" said she playfully, "I have no mind to be kept waiting, since I cannot begin my ride until that business is over."

"And could you not have sent a servant to us," he said, "was it needful that you should tire yourself by coming out in the heat? I shall lock up the poney if you commit any imprudences. Take my arm, and keep in the shade."

"You would make me out to be so very ill," said Aveline as she leaned on him. "I do not despair of having a good gallop on the poney yet. Oh! Mr. Haveloc, you have not told me his name. What is it?"

"Hakon Jarl."

"Delightful! Mamma, did you ever hear such a name? From Oehlenschläger's

tragedy. "He shall have some bread our dinner table."

And Aveline was as good as her and fed the poney from the window in of eating her own dinner.

CHAPTER VIII.

Then you believe not, Arnold, in the stars?
Yes, in the stars—when on a winter's night
They stand as thick as drops of dew new frozen
On the dark arch of Heaven—or when they lie
Mirrowed upon the heaving sea—or steal
Slowly and faint into the Summer sky—
But for these ignorant interpreters,
They scarce are worth the scorn of disbelief.

ANON.

[A]VELINE declared that she would not be
[r]auded of her ride when the evening
[a]e in all its freshness; but Mr. Haveloc
[l] that he saw she was languid; that the
[r]ning was the proper time for exercise,
[ ] that Hakon Jarl should be his com-
[a]on the next day, when he paid his
[r]ects to Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

'Ah! you will come to-morrow, that

is well," said Aveline, "but do not let me go quite without a ride this evening; let me take a turn just round the garden."

Mr. Haveloc glanced at Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Yes, let her," she said in a tone of despondency.

The poney was brought to the window; Aveline was lifted on, and Mr. Haveloc taking the reins led him through the shrubberies, and along the broad terrace.

"I wonder if he could go down the steps upon the sands," said Aveline.

"He could, I have no doubt," said Mr. Haveloc, "but you—"

"I should so enjoy it; riding along the sands by moonlight," said Aveline. "Oh! I am quite strong enough—never fear."

Mr. Haveloc led the poney carefully down the steep steps and over the shingles to the sands, now stretching far and dry, the tide being at its lowest.

"How glad I am that we live by the sea," said Aveline.

"It is delightful for a part of the year," said Mr. Haveloc. "I should not care about it in winter."

"But it is in winter," said Aveline, "that the waves are so rough; you should see them running against that headland on a stormy night; when you catch a glimpse of the foam tossed high against the very peak of the rock there, just when the wind has torn the clouds asunder, and let out a glimpse of the moon for an instant. I would not miss the sea in winter time. And then the hoarse sound of the waves on the shingles grows louder when mixed up with the boisterous north wind. And the surge boils and swells, and then the white froth parts and shows the dark angry water beneath. No! trees and fields are barren in winter; but there is always life in the sea!"

"And this creature is all this while slowly and invisibly borne onwards to the grave," he thought, "so full of the best part of life—the intellectual!"

"You are thinking!" said Aveline.

"And so were you; only you thought aloud," he answered,

"Ah! look Mr. Haveloc, they are launching a boat; let us go a few steps farther and see them. Don't you like the rough noise, and the splash, and the voices of the fishermen together. See, just in the moon's path; and now they are in shadow again. When I was a child I used to envy the fishermen as I saw them starting on a bright evening like this, for their merry night's fishing."

"And they envied you, perhaps, that you were going to enjoy a good night's rest, instead of getting wet and weary, and not knowing whether they should catch fish enough to buy their next day's breakfast."

"Perhaps so," said Aveline. "Few people would envy me now."

"Because you are in bad health."

"Yes. Do you not think mamma is very much depressed to day?"

"She struck me as being so."

"Mr. Lindsay tells her the truth," said Aveline, "it is a comfort to me to be sure of that; as he would tell me the truth if I were to ask him."

"That is a comfort," said Mr. Haveloc, "at least, whatever were to befal me, I would rather know it."

"Did you ever have your fortune told, Mr. Haveloc?"

"No, never. Oh, yes, I forgot! I had my fortune told me once near Rome; in the Campagna."

"By a gipsy?"

"A regular gipsy, with a face like the head of Memnon in the Museum; long eyed, with massive features, and the upper and under lip of equal thickness."

"What did she tell you? Do try and recollect."

"Let me consider," said Mr. Haveloc, leaning against the pony's neck, "first she asked me for a crown."

"Of course you gave it; but such a sum

ought to have bought you a very ha
some fortune."

"So the Sybil seemed to think, for
told me I was greatly beloved by a yo
lady with dark eyes."

Aveline trembled.

"You are cold; we will finish the fort
teller in the house."

"No, no—go on here."

"Let me lead him back to the garden,
forget I am responsible to Mrs. Fitzpat
for your well-being. I will go on; the
I did not know you were superstitious.'

"Yes, I am, about gipsies."

"Well, I ventured to hint that t
pleasing events always told better w
there was a strong contrast between
parties; and that I should be obliged tc
Sybil to furnish my young lady with
eyes before she proceeded any fart
But my Zingara was not so accommc
ing, 'she did not like,' she said, 'to t
with the stars; the dark eyed lady insi
on being attached to me. But, she w
work me an incredible deal of woe.'"

"Ah!" cried Aveline raising her voice almost to a shriek, "what did she say. Tell me how—what came next?"

"I'll tell you what, Miss Fitzpatrick," said he leading the pony up the stony staircase, "when I was a great many years younger, I have sat up telling ghost stories at Christmas, until I was afraid to look behind me; but I never heard that this sport was good for an invalid. You are as much afraid of gipsies as I was of ghosts. We will talk of something else."

"No, but finish I entreat you," said Aveline in a gentle tone.

"Why the Sybil told me that I should survive this injury, whatever it was; but she declined being more explicit. She also said that I should be very happy by and bye, perhaps she meant in Heaven. I hope so. But I gave her another crown and wished her good day."

"Ah!" said Aveline, "my gipsy was more explicit."

"Where did you pick up yours?"

"Here, on the sea-shore."

"And what news did she give yo your money?"

"She told me—shall I repeat it ?"

"Yes, do; that I may laugh you of it ?"

"She told me I should break the of the person I loved best; and that I s die young."

"She was an idiot!" said Mr. Hav

"Ah! my mother. Shall I not brea heart," said Aveline, with a sudden of tears.

"Never; you are in ill-health, and a meaning to words you would lau if you were stronger. I do believe the suffering in illness is the dejection it c You should not allow yourself to weighed down."

"But if I die—"

"But do not think so. The w saw you looked delicate, and thoug could turn her warning to a goo count. I wish I—"

Aveline seized his hand. A gipsy woman was advancing towards them from the other end of the terrace. He was at a loss what to do; he feared to leave Aveline for a single moment, lest she should faint; and still more he feared to let the woman come within speaking distance.

"Have no fears for me. She can say nothing that I do not know," said Aveline.

"Will you have your fortune told, my pretty lady and gentleman," said the woman advancing with the insinuating gestures of her tribe.

"No, there's money for you," said Mr. Haveloc, throwing the woman his purse heavy with gold, "there is more than you could earn. Go now, quickly, the lady is ill."

"Would she like," said the gipsy.

"No, I tell you. Go at once. You have no business here!"

The gipsy made a sign in the air with her hand which filled him with horror; it seemed to him as if she traced the outline

of a coffin:—then laughed, turned, and vanished.

"It is the same," said Aveline, trembling.

"It is the gipsy of the Campagna," he said at the same moment.

"What do you think of it?" said Aveline as he helped her to dismount, and supported her to the sofa. "Is it not as if she came to watch the fulfilment of her prediction?"

"On the contrary. She came knowing it was easier to frighten than to beg money out of people," said he taking a chair beside her. "But your man ought to keep better watch."

"It is not his fault. Remember the terrace is open at one end; but the cliff is so rugged that we always consider it safe. Here comes mamma—let us tell her of it."

Aveline seemed more cheerful again. The supper-table was drawn to the sofa. She related the appearance of the gipsy in a

laughing manner, and tried to make it appear that Mr. Haveloc had been very much frightened.

"Confess," said Aveline, "that she put you into bodily fear."

"I own it," he replied. "You will never say again of me that I do not know what fear is."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick gave him a grateful smile. She could easily understand on whose account he had been alarmed.

"I am afraid you were by no means *quitte pour le peur*," said Aveline helping herself to salad. "Only think, mamma, of his throwing the wretch his purse. So extravagant."

"Very wrong, indeed," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"But when one gets frightened," said he, laughing, "what is to be done? When my servant asks me what has become of my purse, I must say I was stopped by a footpad."

"Will your servant call you to account?"

asked Aveline, opening wide her large e
at the idea of any one taking Mr. Havelo
task.

"I should not wonder. He is a very
servant, and says and does pretty m
what he pleases."

"How I should like to hear you go
together," said Aveline with a smile.

"Oh! it seldom amounts to a di
He generally unburdens his mind at nig
and when I am tired of saying yes,
no, I fall asleep, and so escape
end of the lecture."

"I should like to know, if it
not indiscreet, what the lectures w
about?"

"Generally financial. If he think
have paid more for a horse than it
worth, it is a long time before he gets o
it. He was very much shocked whe
bought that plague of a yacht; and at Rc
he was a perpetual torment. I could har
look at a picture, or a cameo, without

hinting that I should end my career in the Queen's Bench."

"But that shows a great deal of attachment," said Aveline; "one sees too little of that feeling in these days. But we are very fortunate. Mrs. Grant was a treasure."

"Shall I come to-morrow, Mrs. Fitzpatrick?" said Mr. Haveloc rising. "Miss Fitzpatrick meets with nothing but misfortunes when I have the charge of her."

"Oh, come!" said Aveline, "by all means; and leave the pony here. Mark said he could accommodate him, and it will be something for me to pet. I shall feed myself to-morrow."

"There Aveline, you must not sit up any longer," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"I am all obedience," said Aveline rising. "Good night, Mr. Haveloc, I hope you will not meet our gipsy on your way home."

CHAPTER IX.

Our joys are kin to griefs—in time shall cease
The term of soundest health: disease
Dwells in our house, and opes to death a door.
Oft amid favouring gales and summer skies
Destruction's breakers madly rise
And wreck our hopes upon the rocky shore.

AGAMEMNON.

If Mr. Haveloc had not been entirely engrossed by his affection for Margaret, it would have been almost impossible to have been thrown so much in the society of Aveline, and under circumstances of such touching interest, without becoming warmly attached to her.

Her understanding was more matured, her fancy brighter, her acquirements larger than those of Margaret. She had not been

boarding-school; and she had gained
her mother's thoughtful mind, more
ation than from all her masters. She
less beautiful than Margaret—less
eful, but more elegant; there was more
tyle about her appearance, and less of
licity. Therefore she looked older
she was, and Margaret younger. And
he details of domestic life, she was
aps more formed than Margaret, to
est the fancy and excite the atten-

ie was accustomed to make all those
demands upon the sympathy and assis-
e of those around her, which you see so
tantly in French women, and which
enerally attractive to men in this coun-
perhaps from their contrast to the more
t and independant habits of English
en in general.

she wished to give little Jane a bonnet
cloak, Mr. Haveloc and her mamma
summoned to the table, and were
ed to look over the patterns the servant

had brought from the neighbouring town, and discuss the colour and fashion of the garments. And Mr. Haveloc was desired to walk down to Brand's cottage, and look at the child to see whether red or blue would suit her best; and to inquire after Mrs. Brand's health, and to ask the best of the two Toms, whether he had yet been able to find that specimen of sea-weed that Miss Fitzpatrick wanted to complete her orders of Cryptogamia."

Those persons who spend their lives in wandering from place to place, little know how much of interest they forfeit in not having a settled place of abode. So many little elegant trifles accumulate in a home that can never be packed up and carried from one hired residence to another. Mrs. Fitzpatrick's was just the sort of house where one might lounge away the morning delightfully. Chairs and sofas of all patterns were scattered about the room; drawn to the carved tables, or placed temptingly near the large, open window, from which

could step at once into the garden, e the finest flowers filled the air with perfume, and seemed to overrun the baskets in which they were planted. tables were strewn with books and ts; with cameos, carvings and choice atures. Aveline's painting was generally reading stand near the sofa, and a lava tray of modelling tools stood on ab at the farthest end of the room, red by a cambric handkerchief with a ign border of brilliant colours.

Irs. Fitzpatrick was generally to be id seated near the sofa, working at a e frame of embroidery, an employment ace picturesque and dignified for persons niddle age, but which in young people as to be the resource of an indolent d. Aveline had as yet but few of the its of an invalid. She was very careful her costume, which was generally a ly worked muslin made in a foreign ion; with a large Cachemere lying ewhere about the room, which wrapped

her from head to foot when she became chilly. And though it was out of her power to occupy herself for more than a few minutes at a time, yet it was surprising how little of languor pervaded her manner and conversation. She had always a book by her side to glance into when she was at ease, and when her restless fits came over her, she would wander about the room arranging the flowers, or tuning her harp, or turning over the beautiful articles of virtù, with which the room was decorated. And when wrapped in her bright coloured Cachemere she reclined in an easy chair with her silver *bonbonnière* in her fingers which she handled as an old courtier might have done a snuff-box, a stranger could not easily have been made to believe that but a few weeks of life remained to her.

It was singular that Mr. Haveloc never suspected her affection for him. She who seemed to receive new life from his presence; who was entirely and exclusively

occupied with him—who hardly removed her eyes from him when he came, and who spent her time in expecting him when he was away. He treated it all as a sick person's fancy, and submitted far more implicitly to her demands, than if he had been seeking to ingratiate himself in her heart.

Serious illness generally weakens the mind; and in the case of Aveline, it somewhat dimmed her perceptions. She did not attach the exact meaning to Mr. Haveloc's constant visits, that she could not fail to have done in health. She had mourned his absence, she was contented in his society, and it seemed as if she felt no desire to penetrate the future, or to anticipate a time when they must part.

"He is late, mamma," said Aveline one day. "He is certainly later this morning; something has happened. That yacht—you know it was very windy last night."

"My dear child, I can see the yacht from the window; and I do not think he has

been on board of her since we went with him. Besides, we must not be so unreasonable as to look for him always at one hour."

Aveline took up her book again. Presently Mr. Haveloc made his appearance at the drawing-room window with a large flower in his hand; a splendid cup shaped blossom, with white leaves tinged with pink, that shed a delightful perfume all over the room.

"Look, Miss Fitzpatrick," he said coming up to Aveline, "I have waited for some purpose; my water-lilly has flowered this morning. Did you ever see anything so beautiful?"

"And you have brought it me," said Aveline taking the flower, "how good you are. I will put it in water directly. It shall have the Dresden jar all to itself; that with the holly berries."

Mr. Haveloc brought the jar and rang for water.

"And is this a water-lilly?" said she, still admiring the flower.

"Of that species; it came from South America, and is I believe, the only one in England. I had hoped it was a lotus just to put one in mind of Moore's poetry. And how are you to-day?"

"To-day? Charming. I could do all sorts of things. Walk down to the beach, or up to the village; or play a fantasia on the harp." As she spoke, a string flew. "Hark;" she said, "I have lost a harp-string; a small one I think by the sound. Just look and tell me the extent of the damage, Mr. Haveloc."

"One of the very smallest. Look—up at the top here."

"I must get up and mend it," said Aveline. "The harp-strings are in that drawer, Mr. Haveloc; may I trouble you?"

She rose languidly, and moved to the harp; resting her hand on the table as she went: selected one of the strings Mr. Haveloc brought her, and began to undo the broken one. But, in spite of her boast, it

was not one of her good days. She wavered, and caught the harp for support.

"Why will you not rest;" he said, drawing a chair close to her. "I can put on your string—give me the key."

Aveline sank into the chair and resigned her task to him.

"But who taught you to put on harp-strings?" said she, with a searching look.

"I learned it years ago of a harp player, who was teaching the sister of a friend of mine. He said I should one day find it a useful accomplishment. Do you not agree with him?"

"Perfectly!" said Aveline, looking up to him with a smile.

"And which does this string rhyme to?" he asked, when he had put it on.

"Ah! you are right," said Aveline, "these octaves are the rhymes of music. Look, this is the octave."

"Now, will you go back to the sofa?" he asked.

Aveline shook her head. "I am comfort-

able here," she said. "I don't mean to move till I grow restless. Will you have the goodness to bring me that tray? I want to look over my tools."

She threw off the handkerchief, and sat playing with her tools and turning them over like a child.

Mr. Haveloc drew a low chair close to hers and began to examine them also.

"Ah!" said Aveline, looking up, "I was just going to advise you to address yourself to sculpture. It is the finest of all the arts."

"Do you place it above poetry?" he asked.

"Sculpture is poetry," said Aveline eagerly, "only it is a universal language. It is the highest art. It is profaned as every thing in these days is profaned, by the language of ridicule and burlesque. But everything in sculpture that is not addressed to the most ideal feelings, becomes disagreeable. The ideal is the atmosphere of sculpture. It does not admit

of caricature. Think of Danton's villanous statuettes," and Aveline looked all disgust.

"Ah!" said Mr. Haveloc, "there is one of Litzt, on the drawing-room mantel-piece in my villa—a wonderful likeness."

"And you have not broken it to pieces?" claimed Aveline.

"That would not be in accordance with the Ideal," said Mr. Haveloc. "Justice is a cardinal virtue, and I presume a subject worthy of the chisel; and M. Litzt does not belong to me."

"Don't laugh," said Aveline.

"I did not know," said Mr. Haveloc, "that you were such an enemy to the comic muse. I am sure you must enjoy wit."

"Yes. But the spirit of wit is the very essence of prose, in direct opposition to poetry, which takes all things in a serious light. And in these days everything is mocked and parodied until people are laughed out of the little love they have left for what is noble and beautiful."

"And then there will be a great re-

action," said Mr. Haveloc. "We shall all become as sober as judges a few years hence."

"I hope at least," said Aveline "that we shall learn to laugh in the right place, and that will be, not at great, but at little sentiments and actions."

"Do you know, Miss Fitzpatrick, you will think me guilty of treason after your exordium on sculpture. But you talk of the chisel, and your instruments remind me of nothing so much as the apparatus of a dentist."

"Oh, mamma, do scold him!" cried Aveline. "It is atrocious—a dentist too! A race of people of whom I have as much horror as the Egyptians had of their embalmers?"

"Well, really," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, looking up from her work. "All those mysterious slender little instruments, Aveline?"

"It is a calumny!" cried Aveline, gathering up her tools.

"Do not be angry, Miss Fitzpatrick," said Mr. Haveloc. "I will tell you what I do admire. This handkerchief; the border is superb. You got it abroad. I always know people who have travelled, by their coloured handkerchiefs—they are sure to pick them up at Paris."

"Oh! they are common enough in England, now," said Aveline. "But that is a good border, the pattern is Arabesque. You wear them, don't you? Let me look at yours."

Mr. Haveloc produced his handkerchief with a violet edge.

"How dare you!" said Aveline playfully, "It is much finer than mine. What a coxcomb."

"Change then," said Mr. Haveloc.

Aveline seized his handkerchief with all the eagerness of a child, and threw him hers.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick looked with rather a grave smile at Aveline; but she laughed and squeezed it behind the cushion at the

back of her chair, as if to make sure of her new possession.

"You will repent your bargain, but you shall not have it back," said Aveline.

"Not at all," said he. "I have got the handsome border, and for the fineness I know nothing about it."

"It is just dinner time," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "I hope, my dear Aveline, you are ready for it."

"Quite hungry, mamma. Will you run and fetch Hakon Jarl, Mr. Haveloc? I hear Mark coming with his plate of bread."

Mr. Haveloc went off directly, he never hesitated an instant at any of her commands.

As soon as he was gone, she drew out the handkerchief and gazed at it with intense delight.

"Ah!" she said to herself, "I have at last got something of his—I will not again destroy it."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick looked at her with a sigh, but said nothing.

"There is no need now, is there, mamma? When I thought I should never see him again, it was unwise to keep anything to put me in mind of him;" said Aveline, folding and unfolding the handkerchief, and quite engrossed by her own thoughts. "But now that we see him every day—"

"Certainly—it is quite different," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, speaking with effort.

"You feel uncertain about my health," said Aveline, not noticing the anguish her words caused her mother, "but you know it may improve."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick, unable to control her voice, rose and hurried out of the room. This was a most unusual instance of emotion with her, and had Aveline been in health, such a circumstance would have agitated her beyond measure.

"Poor mamma," said she, looking after her mother, "I do believe she worries herself sadly about my health, and no wonder; for at times, I almost despair of myself. I am better now, however."

Mr. Haveloc led the pony up to the window, and Aveline fed him with one slice of bread after another.

"Do you think he knows me, Mr. Haveloc?" she asked.

"He ought," said Mr. Haveloc, "but take care, Miss Fitzpatrick, he will include your fingers in his bill of fare some fine day."

"I am sure he would not do it on purpose," said Aveline.

"Ah! here is Mr. Lindsay. I am really glad to see you this morning; mamma is very low about me. Go and cheer her—tell her I am better."

"No—but are you?" asked Mr. Lindsay.

"What has that to do with it? I don't want you to blind me, Mr. Lindsay, but mamma. But seriously, I am no worse than when you last saw me."

"So I find; you are much the same," said Mr. Lindsay, removing his fingers from her pulse.

"And it is more important that you

should give me a good word," said Aveline, "because I meditate doing something very imprudent to morrow."

"Ay—what is that?" said Mr. Lindsay.

"Going to church, doctor," replied Aveline.

"You could not do better," said the doctor drily. It will be a glorious hot day; and the little walk up that steep hill will just put you into condition for sitting two hours on an uneasy straight bench;—go by all means."

"I thought you would be perverse, doctor," said Aveline. "I expected it. And let me tell you, in the first place, I am not going to walk. I mean to ride Hakon Jarl. Take him back, Mr. Haveloc, I have no more bread to give him."

"And why, in the name of all that's good, cannot you stop and say your prayers at home?" asked the doctor.

"Because I don't choose it, doctor. I like to go to church."

"Ah! a good many people think there is something mysterious in the air of a church," said Mr. Lindsay. "However take your own course; there is something truly pious in a bad cold caught in a damp pew —it sends people now and then to Heaven before their time, I grant you."

"Ah, doctor, if people did not know you, they would not think you so good as you are. Now mind what you are about to mamma."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick was now quite composed, even cheerful. She shook hands with Mr. Lindsay; "begged him to take some luncheon at their early dinner," and summoned Mr. Haveloc from the garden.

"Aveline is your charge you know," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "I do not even venture to carve for her."

"What shall it be, Miss Fitzpatrick?" said Mr. Haveloc, drawing his chair to the table.

"Sweetbread, I think," said Aveline, looking round, "and mushrooms."

"No mushrooms;" said Mr. Lindsay.

"I will!" said Aveline.

Mr. Haveloc put them on her plate.

"What do you always shake your head for, doctor, when you look at him?" asked Aveline, laughing; "has he so much the appearance of a bad subject?"

"I shook my head at the mushrooms," said Mr. Lindsay.

"You see, doctor, her spirits are very good," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, in a low voice.

"I see," he replied, with a nod. But it was evident he saw no comfort in it.

. . . . .

Every one knows the stillness that seems to settle over town and country on the Sunday in England. Even in the most retired spot, everything is more silent and quiet than before. No sound of waggons in the neighbouring lanes; no rural noise of labourers going forth to their daily toil. And when the scenery chances to be beautiful, the day warm

and fine, and this delicious quiet diffused around, only broken by the distant and uncertain sound of the church bells; there are few persons who would be tempted to exchange this refreshing pause from labour; this purifying rest to the mind, for the gaudy revelry of a continental Sabbath day.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick pointed out this stillness to Mr. Haveloc, when he met her in front of her cottage the next morning.

"It always brings to my mind those words of the Psalmist," she said, "'Be still, and know that I am God!' As if this complete and solemn repose were necessary to the mind, before contemplating the majesty of the Divine nature."

"Does Miss Fitzpatrick still hold to her intention," he asked.

"She does; unless you can persuade her out of it."

"I feel very uneasy at the idea of her going. I saw plainly that Mr. Lindsay did not like it."

"Good morning, Mr. Haveloc," said Aveline. She was standing at the open window, ready for church. Her white dress and splendid shawl, fastened by two large gold pins, gave something of amplitude to her figure; but her face looked more wasted in her bonnet, and the bright colour on her cheeks seemed to assort but ill with their shrunken outline. She seemed more than usually grave and quiet; not exactly in low spirits, but a kind of settled melancholy; she sat down, and gave her hand to Mr. Haveloc; then occupied herself quietly in putting on her gloves. They were a new pair of her usual size, but now much too large. She fastened them, and looked at them for a minute without speaking.

"Are you sure you are quite equal to going, my dearest?" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, struck and chilled by Aveline's manner.

"Quite, mamma," said she, steadily.

"You will not be prudent, and let me read prayers to you at home?" said Mr. Haveloc, who was leaning over her chair.

"Not to day; but if I live, Mr. Haveloc, I shall call upon you another Sunday in that capacity," returned Aveline, in a low voice.

"The poney is ready," he said, taking up her prayer-book.

"You think me very wilful, I am afraid," said she, as he arranged her cloak, around her.

"Sick people have a right, you know, to be wilful," he replied.

Aveline sighed; and spoke no more during the ride. Mr. Haveloc led the poney, and Mrs. Fitzpatrick walked by her daughter's side.

At the gate of the church-yard she dismounted, and Mark, who had followed at a distance, led the poney away to the Vicarage till the service was over.

Aveline bore the fatigue remarkably well. She remained seated and abstracted, repeating solemnly the responses with the people. Sometimes she seemed to shiver, as if something awful occurred to her mind.

But at the Belief, she rose up suddenly, and remained standing with her face turned to the altar, repeating the words after the clergyman in a distinct voice. And it seemed to be quite involuntary on her part, for she sat down again with the same abstracted air, and remained during the service apparently unconscious, or forgetful of the presence of any one.

"I thought I got through it very well," said Aveline, as she was going home.

"Much better, my love, than I expected," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Don't hurry the pony, Mr. Haveloc; this road is so beautiful. I am not at all impatient to get home," said Aveline.

It was a narrow, steep lane, with high banks, partly composed of broad ledges of rock, with all their fine variety of colours, showing through fern and creepers, and stunted bushes of oak and maple.

Mr. Haveloc led the poney as slowly as he liked to go, stopping from time to time to gather wild flowers for Aveline.

All at once the sun went in; the air became chilly—then the wind rose. Dark masses of ragged vapour came hurrying over the landscape, floating and drifting over the hills; now parting like a curtain, now collecting and settling in a dense mass that almost concealed the outline of the country.

"It is the sea-fog. It is coming towards us!" cried Mrs. Fitzpatrick. "What are we to do with Aveline?"

She looked really bewildered.

"Oh, my dear mamma, don't mind me," said Aveline; "Mrs. Grant's cottage is at the end of the lane; I will go in there till the fog is past."

"Let us make haste then, Mr. Haveloc," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, mending her pace; "the fog travels fast. She will be wet. What will become of us?"

"Can you go faster?" asked Mr. Havelock, who was urging the pony as fast as he could walk.

"No; my head swims," said Aveline.

She could not bear anything like agitation or hurry.

Mrs. Grant, who had just arrived from church by a path across the fields, was all astonishment when she saw the party coming briskly towards the cottage door. She stepped out of the little garden gate to meet them.

"Why, Miss Aveline, my dear young lady, what brings you out so far from home?" she asked.

Aveline was too flurried to speak.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick began her explanations, but they were interrupted in the midst, for Aveline, after a vain attempt to get off the poney, sank into Mr. Haveloc's arms, and fainted away.

Mrs. Grant was terribly frightened. She thought at first that Aveline was dead. Mrs. Fitzpatrick, as usual, calm and prompt.

"Don't go away," were her first words when she recovered, turning her eyes in search of Mr. Haveloc.

"Tell me when you are quite restored, that I may have the pleasure of scolding you," he said, coming up to her chair. "I do not know what business you have to frighten us in this way."

"I will tell you what, dear Mrs. Grant," said Aveline, "we will send for our dinner to add to yours, and we will all dine together. It will be something like a pic-nic."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick agreed. Aveline could not move at present, and she must not be kept waiting for her dinner.

Mr. Haveloc offered to walk home, and give what orders Mrs. Fitzpatrick pleased.

"And be sure to come back and dine with us," said Aveline, eagerly.

"Have a little mercy on him, Aveline," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, smiling; "he may not be quite so fond of pic-nics as you are."

But Aveline insisted; and Mr. Haveloc readily promised that he would come back to dine.

"Is not it nice, Mr. Haveloc?" said

Aveline, when they were all seated round the little table in Mrs. Grant's kitchen. Aveline being in the old lady's easy chair, supported with pillows.

If anybody had told Mr. Haveloc at any period of his life, that he would be dining in a cottage with an old nurse, he would have thought he might safely deny the charge; but as he was there, he quite won Mrs. Grant's heart by his politeness to her; and so overcame her by his care for Aveline, that although not much given to hyperbole, she frankly owned that she thought him an angel, the first moment she was alone with Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

The sea-fog passed off, and the afternoon was brilliant.

Mark led home the pony, and bespoke a carriage from the inn, to take Aveline home after tea.

She laid down on the nurse's bed till tea-time; and then rose refreshed and better.

The nurse remained with her, and, at her

particular desire, Mr. Haveloc and her mamma went to church a second time.

"And, my darling, whatever you do, don't go to church again until Mr. Lindsay gives you leave," said Mrs. Grant, as she helped Aveline into the carriage.

"Ah, Mrs. Grant!" said Aveline, "if I had not felt that this would be the last time, do you think I should have been so earnest to go?"

CHAPTER X.

Ant. Thee will I love, and with thee lead my life;
Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife;
Give me thy hand.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THERE was, perhaps, nothing on earth for which Elizabeth Gage would have felt more unmixed contempt, than for an unrequited attachment;—no fate under Heaven from which she would have considered herself more utterly exempt; and yet, to her dismay, she began to suspect that she felt too warm an interest for her father's guest. The fact was, that she had felt this interest and admiration so very long before they met, that it was not now a very easy task to undo these feelings. She merely copied strictly the silence and reserve that distin-

guished his manner; talked no more than politeness demanded; and at once wished and dreaded the termination of his visit.

He suited Captain Gage admirably, though no two characters could be more opposite. He was less like a sailor than a courtier of Elizabeth's reign. His gravity, his classical tastes, his habits of study, his proficiency in the dead languages, together with that cast of countenance seldom seen but in the age to which it belongs, seemed to stamp him as the companion of Raleigh and Southampton. But he still retained a plainness of speech and directness of purpose that is supposed to be generally indicative of the profession to which he belonged.

He had regained his health in great measure. He did as other people; he joined Elizabeth and her father in their rides and walks; he knew all Captain Gage's tenants; he had been with Elizabeth to the almshouses; he even carried her basket for her, but always in silence. He had observed

her at the head of her father's table, in their large dinner parties; he had gone out with them in return; he had watched the four or five young gentlemen who were pretending timidly to Miss Gage's favour, and the two middle aged men who alternately made her an offer once a quarter.

One sunny morning in August, Elizabeth came into the breakfast-room, where her father was standing by the open glass doors, and having embraced him and taken her place before the urn, she saw Sir Philip at a little distance on the lawn, talking to one of the gardeners.

"My dear father," said she, "have the charity to tell him breakfast is ready, for I am no Beatrice that I should summon him to table."

Captain Gage laughed and made a sign to his friend.

"Have you much of a garden at Sherleigh?" he asked, when they were seated at the table.

"I dare say not," replied Sir Philip,

"I have not been there for years, and people seldom attend much to a garden unless there is a lady to overlook them."

"Bessy never does anything to my flowers, except gather them," said Captain Gage.

"What!" said Elizabeth, laughing, "did you find out that I took the red passion-flower yesterday?"

"Yes, I saw it," said her father, "will you write those letters for me after breakfast?"

Elizabeth always wrote her father's business letters. She seated herself at a table and selected pens and paper.

"Papa! I must complain of you," she said, "you take my best envelopes for everybody. Suppose I were to want to send out invitations; I should have nothing but coarse paper left."

"Which? The envelopes with the crest? Oh! I will be careful in future; you are very stingy of your best paper."

"Well, I am to write to Palmer about

the meadows, and to Brown about the lease. Anything else?"

"Why I don't know what to do about the bees; if you could send a line to Harding—"

"My dear father, we are fated never to keep bees, but if you have any fancy for the hives—"

"You are a saucy girl; have you written to Palmer?"

"Yes, there it is."

"Excellent. Oh! what does George mean to do about his brown horse?"

"Calypso? He left him here for me to ride during the summer."

"You—ride Calypso—my good child, you will break your neck."

"If you are going to the farm to-day, my dear father, I will prove to you that Calypso can be ridden without such a catastrophe."

"Look here," said her father, taking a letter from a servant, "here are cards for Mrs. Hollingsworth's ball."

This was a lady of large fortune in the neighbourhood, whose eldest son was a very persevering admirer of Miss Gage's.

Sir Philip was reading the paper in the window.

"My dear father, I will not go," said Elizabeth in a low but decided tone.

"Why, Bessy, how is that?" said her father, looking much amused, "Mrs. Hollingsworth's balls are excellent, and there is Charles Hollingsworth for your partner."

"My dear father, I will not subject myself to the annoyance of being in his company," said Elizabeth in the same low tone, "I consider myself very much aggrieved by that person."

"Why, my dear, he would make you an offer to-morrow, if you would give him any hope."

"But do you not see," said Elizabeth, "that he owes it to me to give me the power to put a stop to his attentions, if they are unpleasing to me. There is something of cowardice in subjecting one, without

ceasing, to civilities which must end in nothing, but which, in the meantime, cause a great deal of gossip, and which a woman has no power to arrest except by a refusal. I consider myself," said she, half laughing, "very unjustly treated by Mr. Hollingsworth."

"And Mrs. Hollingsworth has the match so much at heart," said Captain Gage, taking up the note which accompanied the cards; "here you see she begs us to dine and dress at her house. Offers beds: but you are made of flint."

"She does not offer to send Mr. Charles out of the way," said Elizabeth, "do not go, my dear father, for my sake."

"And here is a card for Sir Philip," continued Captain Gage, "what say you d'Eyncourt, have you any fancy to go to this ball?"

"If Miss Gage had intended to go," said Sir Philip, looking up from the paper with his usual gravity, "I should have liked to see her dance; but as she declines

I shall be obliged to you to include me in your refusal."

"No one has seen me dance within the memory of man, Sir Philip," said Elizabeth, smiling, "I walk through one quadrille always for form's sake."

"Well then, Bessy, write a civil refusal, full of regrets," said Captain Gage, laying the note before her, "I must go and speak to Meadows about the carriage horses."

She took up a pen. Sir Philip drew his chair nearer to hers.

"How shall you decline?" he asked.

Elizabeth thought him rather curious, but as he was partly interested in the matter, she replied at once:

"I shall be able to tell her fortunately, that we are expecting some friends to stay with us the week after next."

"And if she should invite the friends?"

"Nay, that would be very malicious," said Elizabeth, laughing.

"But supposing such a case," said Sir Philip.

"Still fortune favours me," said Elizabeth, "for the friends we expect are an elderly couple, who certainly would not go to a ball."

"If the lady has a great interest in your coming, I think she would hardly give you up so easily," remarked Sir Philip.

"Ah! Sir Philip," said Elizabeth turning to him with a smile and a blush, "you chanced to hear what my father and I were talking about. Happily there is no one whom I should so little regret overhearing us."

"And why so?"

"Because, in the first place, it is a subject which will not interest you sufficiently to dwell on your memory; and secondly, anything of that nature I am confident would be as safe with you as with ourselves."

"Miss Gage," said Sir Philip, looking

earnestly at her, "I am a great many years older than you."

"That you must be," said Elizabeth, "for I remember you grown up when I was a child; yet you see how little difference there is now. You were alluding to the ball, were you not? You have outlived your taste for dancing, and I always felt too old for it."

"Permit me," said Sir Philip, surveying her still more earnestly, "to ask if you are disengaged."

"Perfectly; as soon as I have sealed this note," said Elizabeth, lighting the taper. "Do you think of going to S—— this morning? You can see the Cathedral, but you will be too late for service; you had better defer it till to-morrow."

But while she was speaking, she turned her head away to avoid his grave regard, a drop of wax fell on her finger.

"There!" said Sir Philip, taking her hand and examining it attentively, "you

have burnt your finger. How very careless; you were not looking at what you were doing."

"True," said Elizabeth, smiling at the blunt way in which he showed his interest; "it is a trick I have of burning my fingers when I seal letters; and to-day is Friday, I must tell, papa. He is very superstitious about Fridays."

"Tell him also that I love you sincerely," said Sir Philip, "that I demand of him this hand; that I do not know how to recommend myself to you, and that he must therefore be my friend."

"You, Sir Philip, I cannot express to you my astonishment."

"I wonder who could remain for three weeks in a house with you," said Sir Philip, with a blunt admiration in his look and voice, "without coming to the same pass. You are not angry."

"No, Sir Philip," she replied.

"You are all candour, I know you would speak the truth at once. I am more happy

than I dared to hope," said her companion.

Elizabeth smiled and looked down.

"Well, now," said Sir Philip, taking both her hands, "will you have the goodness to fix a day for our marriage? You see I am ordered abroad for my health, and naturally I wish to take you with me."

"Really, Sir Philip," said Elizabeth, "you are too hasty; consider how short a time we have known each other."

"I have known Captain Gage a long time," said Sir Philip, "I was his first lieutenant when he was on the West India station; that is the same thing. How many times I have said to myself, 'I will marry Gage's daughter; if she will not have me, it is easy for me to remain single.'"

Elizabeth started. How often had she, in rejecting her lovers, said in her turn, "until I meet with some one like Sir Philip d'Eyncourt, I will never marry."

"And yet you did not recollect me, that evening," said she.

"I expressed myself badly," he replied, "I meant that I could not trace any resemblance between what you were, and what I now find you. You were a very nice little girl; you are, a beautiful woman."

"And you have learned to flatter," said Elizabeth blushing.

"No, it is just my opinion, now I am going to find your father. It seems quite singular to ask Gage to accept me as a son-in-law. He is not a dozen years older than I am."

A few weeks after this conversation, Captain Gage had the satisfaction of bestowing his daughter's hand upon Sir Philip d'Eyncourt: and a few days afterwards, Margaret who had officiated as one of the bridesmaids, accompanied her uncle to the sea-side; for he had at last consented to listen to his physician, and to consider his illness of importance.

CHAPTER XI.

And now that hope and joy are seen to fade,
Like stars dim gliding till they mix with shade;
Now that thy cheek has sorrow's canker proved
When thus by sickness changed, ah! more beloved.

ELTON.

"AVELINE, my love, it is impossible that you can ride the pony to-day. Pray give up the idea. Do you not agree with me, Mr. Haveloc?"

Mr. Haveloc was always appealed to, for Aveline had become irritable; a phase of her complaint upon which her sweet temper and habitual self-command had no influence.

"No, you cannot ride to-day," said Mr. Haveloc, approaching the easy chair in

which she was sitting, propped up with pillows; "you frightened us all too much yesterday. You are hardly out of your fainting-fit, and you wish to bring on another. Consider our nerves!"

Aveline looked up at him and smiled, even her mother had not the control over her that he had.

"But look," she said, "what beautiful weather; it is hard that I should remain in the house all day. You know I cannot walk. What am I to do?"

"Shall I row you," he said, "you can have as many pillows as you like; and you may lie as quietly as you would on the sofa."

"No," said Aveline, "I am afraid that my head would not bear the motion of the boat."

"And yet you thought of riding," said Mr. Haveloc, with a smile.

This was an imprudent remark, sick people require managing.

"Riding is quite different!" said Aveline

angrily; "you do not know how to distinguish!"

Fortunately with all his impatience of temper, she never roused it. He pitied her too deeply; and without feeling the slightest attachment to her in the ordinary sense of the term, he had become very fond of her; he was won by the reliance she had placed in him for every thing.

He met Mrs. Fitzpatrick's eyes turned gratefully upon him, and smiled.

"No; I know nothing about it," he said, leaning over Aveline's chair, "I have no experience in illness. I cannot measure your strength."

"Then," said Aveline with a slight want of consistency, "what should you advise me to do?"

"Let us wheel you in this chair upon the grass; there you can enjoy the sea breeze, and you will be in the shade."

Aveline agreed to this, and she was soon established under the trees, with a

little table at her elbow on which stood a glass of water, a plate of hot-house grapes, and a splendid cluster of flowers.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick with her work on one side of the chair, Mr. Haveloc on the grass with a book.

"What are you reading, Mr. Haveloc, that makes you smile?"

"Boiardo, there is something so dry in his manner."

"Do not read to yourself, it fidgets me," said Aveline.

Mr. Haveloc closed his book, and began throwing pebbles on the beach below them.

"Have you much of this pink clematis, Mr. Haveloc," asked Aveline, examining her bouquet.

"There is one plant of it."

"Have you them in any other colour?"

"Yes; in white. But I brought you the pink because it is the greatest novelty."

"Bring me both kinds to-morrow."

"I will."

"And some of the heaths you were talking about."

"Yes; you shall have a splendid bouquet to-morrow."

"Your gardens will be quite devastated, Mr. Haveloc," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"That will be of no consequence," he said.

"I wish, Mr. Haveloc," said Aveline, "that you would shoot me a partridge, I should like it for my dinner."

It was the first of September. Now if she had asked him to shoot her a golden eagle, it would have been just as much in his power. He was too near-sighted to shoot; and moreover he had not applied for permission to shoot any where that year. He looked to Mrs. Fitzpatrick for assistance.

"You know, my love," said her mother, "it could not be in time for your dinner to day."

"Yes; I would wait for it," said Aveline.

"The truth is," said Mr. Haveloc, "I am no marksman, my sight is so bad that I could not distinguish a partridge on that walk."

"You say that only to teaze me;" said Aveline, "you can always see mamma when she comes out of the avenue."

"But then your mamma is something larger than a partridge," said Mr. Haveloc.

"Then I am to go without it, I suppose," said Aveline.

"No, for I will go to the next town and bring you one."

"And what shall I do without you all that while;" asked Aveline impatiently.

At this moment, Mr. Lindsay appeared at the drawing-room window, and joined the party on the lawn.

"What are you all caballing about," he asked.

"Aveline has a fancy for a partridge, Mr. Lindsay," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick; "how shall I get one?"

"I have brought one with me," said Mr. Lindsay, "I left it with your cook."

"I am glad you did not depend on me," said Mr. Haveloc, "I should have blundered over the turnip fields all day, and brought you nothing."

"Well, do not you find it very warm," said Mr. Lindsay, "beautiful grapes you have! Where do they come from?"

"Taste them, doctor," said Aveline, "Mr. Haveloc brought them."

The doctor looked at Mr. Haveloc, gave a slight shake of the head, and tasted the grapes. He believed him under the illusion of an attachment to Aveline; for middle-aged people are apt to consider the affections as illusions. But he pitied him, as he would have done any one suffering under a nervous complaint, for he knew that while they last, nervous complaints are as definite as the loss of a limb.

But soon these fits of irritation disappeared altogether; she became placid, grateful, tender; her strength was ebbing away.

Mr. Haveloc came in the morning, only

to depart at night. His attention was unremitting; and Aveline seemed only to live in his presence. To wait for his coming; to kindle into life at his footstep; to rest for hours content to look at him; to talk to him on religious subjects, in which he became the learner, and she unconsciously, the teacher. These privileges as she considered them, soothed her later hours, and softened her pilgrimage to the grave. It was not the "Valley of the Shadow" to her. She possessed the sacred support, the healing consolation of a profound religious conviction, which she had not delayed till that hour to seek and to enjoy; and her sickness had purchased for her what she never could have obtained in the days of her beauty and health—the companionship of the person she loved. And, always in extremes, he devoted himself to her comfort with a zeal that astonished Mrs. Fitzpatrick. He seemed to know intuitively how to arrange her flowers—to move her pillows, how to amuse her when

she was calm, and to be silent when she was weary. He knew how to draw her attention from her mother on those rare occasions when Mrs. Fitzpatrick gave way to a burst of sorrow. He was her confidant in those trifling arrangements for the future with which she was unwilling to disturb her mother's feelings.

And to her subdued and serious state of mind, her attachment to him took the quiet colour of her other thoughts. She knew that she had done with life; and her affection for him was such as she might carry beyond the tomb.

And thus subdued by illness, yet sustained by the brightest hopes, she tranquilly awaited the moment when her Angel should summon her from the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

Soph. You powers, that take into your care the guard
Of innocence, aid me! for I am a creature
So forfeited to despair, hope cannot fancy
A ransom to redeem me. . . . .
. . . . Was't for this he left me
And, on a feigned pretence—

THE PICTURE.

It would be too adventurous an incident to introduce if this tale were an invention instead of a narrative of facts, that Mr. Grey was ordered by his physician to a part of the coast very near to that where Mrs. Fitzpatrick's cottage was situate. Not a mile of rough hilly ground divided their dwellings from each other. This choice of a *locale* was very easily accounted for.

Mr. Warde was acquainted with Mr. Fletcher, the clergyman of the parish, and wrote to beg him to select a house for his friend. Mr. Fletcher did his best, but houses were not plentiful in that district. It was a pretty cottage, but really deserving of no other name. Mr. Grey did not enjoy it at all; he missed the luxuries of his own house. The casements did not shut, the chimnies smoked. There was no piano for Margaret, and Land's room was so small as to be a daily source of disquiet to his master. He was more annoyed for others than for himself. Little did Margaret think when she went down to the sea-side every morning, and sat patiently by her uncle's chair with her book and her work, that the person who most occupied her mind, was within so short a distance, engaged in the same sort of pursuit, in watching over the declining health of a friend.

But her uncle grew weaker and more restless; he determined to return to Ash-

dale; and having once fixed the day, he seemed more comfortable in his mind.

"Do you like the idea of it, my child?" said he to Margaret, "shall you not be glad to get back to Ashdale?"

"Very glad, Sir," returned Margaret.

"It must be dull, indeed, for you," said Mr. Grey in a pitying tone, "not a single soul here that we know. We might, to be sure, know the clergyman; but he gets a holiday exactly at the wrong time, and the man who does his duty for him does not live in the place Not a shop to be seen, nor anything for the child to read but the paper; and that she does not care about, poor little thing."

"Oh, uncle! if you were well I should not find it dull," said Margaret, "I should enjoy the sea and the beautiful rocks above everything. But when there is anything the matter, one always feels safer at home."

Mr. Grey smiled, and said something as he went away about wishing to see Case-

ment again, in which desire Margaret could not join.

As it was his habit to rest in his own room during the afternoon, Margaret took her work into the porch, and sat enjoying the sea breeze, and watching the picturesque road that wound beneath the cottage along the shore. She had found out that when the mind is anxious and distressed, the best thing she could do was to work. Her thoughts could not be compelled to study, and her needle passed the time a little more calmly and quickly than when she was doing nothing. And now a labourer might be seen driving a cart drawn by a yoke of oxen along the rugged way; and then a couple of children carrying between them a basket which they had been sent to fill at the neighbouring village; and but for such rare passengers, the road was quiet all day long. While she sat, thinking of the one subject that filled her mind when she could divert it for a moment from her uncle's illness;

thinking over all that Mr. Haveloc had ever said and done at Ashdale, she saw, advancing up the path a figure that made her start and colour, it was—she felt sure of it—Hubert Gage.

He was walking very fast, opened the rustic gate himself, and hastened up to her.

Her first thought was a fear about Elizabeth.

"Bessy is well, I hope?" said she eagerly.

"Quite well. At last I see you again! How difficult you have made this to me! How impossible it was at Ashdale to gain speech of you even for a moment!"

"Have you long returned from Ireland?" said Margaret, feeling greatly embarrassed by the tone of her companion.

"Long? This instant! As soon as I learned where you were, I followed you."

"And Bessy is really well?"

"Bessy? Yes," said he in a tone of impatience. "Let me speak about yourself. Margaret, you have done me a great

injustice, and you have not given me the means of defending myself. You have thought me incapable of loving you as you deserved."

Margaret held up her hand as if to stop him, he seized it, and pressed it to his lips.

"I tell you what, Mr. Hubert Gage, this will not do," said Margaret gravely, regaining possession of her hand; there is a great want of consideration in your conduct. I am sure you pay very little regard to my tranquillity in coming here. My uncle is very ill, and all my time and thoughts are occupied in attending upon him. I have no time, and I must say no patience for these scenes."

Land came down at this moment with Mr. Grey's compliments, and "hearing Mr. Hubert was below, hoped he would stop to dinner."

He accepted the invitation, then turning to Margaret, as Land disappeared, said:—

"I will retract. I will go back instantly if you will make me one promise—I have a right to claim it; a right from all you have made me suffer. Give me the means of seeing you. I have not had fair play—you have not allowed me to address you—to seek to gain your confidence, your love. Cruel! to make your refusal so absolute; to leave me no hope; but I will not be so repulsed: you know nothing of me as yet. Why deny me—"

"Mr. Hubert, you will not listen to me," said Margaret, anxious to bring the dialogue to a conclusion.

"You are so charming! You look a thousand-fold more beautiful than when I saw you last. But what of your beauty? Nothing to that angelic disposition which animates all you do. You thought me so trifling that I could not comprehend your heart. Margaret, it was that which made me seek you."

"I am very sorry that I wronged you so far," said Margaret. "I did not think it

was your nature to care much—to love much,—I mean to be much in earnest about anything. If, indeed," said she, marking the distressed expression of his countenance, "your happiness is disturbed, I am still more sorry; but I can do nothing. I cannot tell you falsely that I shall ever change."

"You will not! See what you do! You have made my whole life wretched—worse than that, useless. I can settle to nothing. I cannot leave the country where you are. But I will not despair. You shall see more of me—you shall love me yet."

"There is one thing," said Margaret with a little air of triumph, "we leave this place on Thursday."

"So much the better," said Hubert, "for I shall be very near you at Chirke Weston."

Margaret looked vexed and undecided. She thought there was but one way to put a stop to his assiduities; and although

with great reluctance, she resolved to adopt it.

"You compel me to be very plain with you, Mr. Hubert," she said; "but I cannot see any other means of convincing you that we can be no more than friends to one another. I am engaged to another person."

"Engaged! How is it possible? How can I believe it? You so young—and living so retired. May I ask if Mr. Grey is aware of this engagement?"

"He is," said Margaret.

"Why then it is Claude Haveloc!" said Hubert, leaning against the side of the porch.

Margaret was silent. He remained standing, apparently much disturbed.

"And you are engaged to Claude Haveloc?" said he, throwing himself on the seat beside her.

Her colour mounted; but she made a gesture of assent.

He remained for some moments apparently undecided as to what he should say or do; and then looking up suddenly, took her hand.

"Forget me if you will," he said; "but never give a thought to him again."

"Mr. Hubert!" said Margaret, colouring with anger.

"He is entirely unworthy of you; it is the talk of the village beyond you there; he is paying his addresses to a young lady who is dying of a consumption. But his attentions for weeks have been too marked to admit of a doubt. He is pitied and praised by every one. He is daily and all day at the house."

"Well that can be explained. I will ask him," said Margaret, trying to speak calmly.

"You can do better than ask him. You can see and judge for yourself. Walk past the house at any hour, and find him, as I saw him, at the feet of your rival."

A thought for one moment crossed the

mind of Margaret: she would revenge herself for this neglect—she would accept the hand of Hubert Gage. But she felt at once the unworthiness of such an idea, and remained trembling and silent, looking on the ground.

"Where is this house?" said she after a short pause.

"I can show it to you better than I could describe it," he replied. "It was in searching for you that I lighted upon this history."

"I am much indebted to you," said she with a strange smile.

Her manner, usually so soft, seemed suddenly to change. There was something cold and bitter in her voice.

"And what will you do?" he asked.

"After dinner, when my uncle sleeps, I walk out," said Margaret; "you can then show me this house."

Her seeming calmness quite deceived him; he thought that she was not suffering much. That once convinced her lover

had wronged her, she might be wooed and won again.

"I am going to my uncle now," said she. "I shall see you at dinner;" and taking up her work-basket she left him.

Hubert did not see her again until dinner was announced; she was then standing by her uncle's chair, and seemed to take no notice of his presence. Mr. Grey welcomed him very kindly; he thought Hubert's visit so amiable, so well-meant. It showed that he did not resent what had happened.

He asked a number of questions about Captain Gage, and the d'Eyncourt's, about his own plans and proceedings; and about their neighbours at Ashdale. Hubert with his eyes fixed on Margaret answered at cross purposes.

Margaret was perfectly silent. She helped the dishes before her with the mechanical accuracy of a person in a dream. She ate nothing herself, and seemed hardly to know that any one was at table. As soon as the

cloth was removed, she rose. Hubert who had watched in vain for some word or sign which might tell him that she held to her intention of the morning, followed her to the door.

She turned as she left the room, and, in a whisper almost inaudible, uttered the word "wait." Mr. Grey soon afterwards apologised for leaving his guest; he was obliged to retire early. Margaret would be in the drawing-room; he hoped Hubert would stay and drink tea.

Hubert took leave of Mr. Grey, and waited until the twilight came, and was succeeded by the broad moonlight, and still Margaret did not appear. At last, when he thought of going into the house to seek her, for he was sauntering up and down the small garden, he saw her standing in the doorway, wrapped in a large shawl.

"Am I too late?" she said, as he approached her.

"Are you ready?" he returned.

"I am," said she, shivering, and hurry-

ing into the garden, "my uncle sleeps. Heaven knows whether I shall ever sleep again! There have been treasures paid for knowledge that might have bought a world of peace twice told. You know that some knowledge brings death in its train. Lead me on; if you dare."

Her eyes flashed, even through the twilight; she drew herself up and assumed an air of defiance that he could not have believed possible to her soft and exquisite beauty. He had yet to learn what it was to rouse a gentle nature.

Hubert paused beneath the shrubs in the small garden.

"Choose;" he said, "I do not say that knowledge is not pain; and ignorance, the grossest ignorance, content. You have not now to learn that I love you. You can give what faith you please to my accusation."

"I cannot doubt you," said Margaret, "let us make haste; I shall never go if I do not go soon. I am sick—sick."

They passed down the shady lane, where

the moonlight traced a fair trellis-work of boughs and leaves upon the rocky path; and at every step, as the road grew more uneven, and as Hubert supported her over the rugged stones, she cried to him to make haste. She went like one who walked in her sleep, still struggling for swiftness, and more and more unable to stir as her wish to move grew more pressing. Hubert almost carried her the few last steps of the way; and there stood the cottage by the side of the hill, where it broke gently away down to the sea shore. The waves rippled and sank down upon the beach to a low sweet music that seemed almost charged with words, so clear and measured was the sound in that still night.

Margaret stopped for breath, and hung heavily upon his arm. Then the thought crossed her mind that if Mr. Haveloc was innocent, and came there by chance, finding her walking alone with Hubert Gage, what would he think?

"Oh, Heaven!" she said, clasping her

hands in agony, "forget that you love me —speak to me as a sister. Is this true?"

"I never pressed you to believe me," answered her companion.

"Oh, true, true!" said Margaret, hastening on.

She had hardly gone three paces when she stopped again.

"Coward that I am," said she, "to pry upon his actions; to seek these miserable means of learning his pursuits. He trusts me wholly. I will ask him what he does there visiting so often; and if—if he loves her better, let him go. I would set free an Emperor, if he was willing to be released. I'll not go on. I'll learn nothing this way."

She was gasping for breath. Hubert Gage turned without another word, and held out his hand to conduct her back again, but she repulsed him, and stood clasping her temples with a force that seemed designed to hold in her reason.

"If you think," said she very slowly, for she was collecting her ideas, "that I

shall like you better when I have learned to hate him, know, once for all, that you will be more intolerable in my eyes than Claude himself."

He looked distressed, but made no answer.

She paused a moment, and then said in a more quiet tone. "Be sure you say nothing of all this to my uncle; it would so vex him. He is not well enough—"

He gave her this promise; and having reached the garden fence, he said he would wait for her while she went down the terrace walk. She made him a sign of silence, and stole gently forward till she came under the verandah. The drawing-room windows were unclosed, and she heard and saw all that passed within. A sofa was drawn close to the window, on which reclined a girl of seventeen, who still retained much of the graceful beauty that had distinguished her. Tall and slight, the full muslin wrapper in part concealed the wasting influence of that disease which

had so nearly fulfilled its task. Her eyes, with their long black fringes, seemed to take a disproportioned share in her face, and her profuse dark hair, which had been wound in large folds at the back of her head, had fallen in long tresses like broad ribbons over the cushions that she lay upon. She was reclining, half supported in a sitting posture by Mr. Haveloc. Her head leaned on his shoulder, and her splendid eyes rested on his face as if she knew there was a very little time for her to impress every feature on her memory. He sat quite silent for some minutes, and Aveline's wasted hand lay passively in his. At last she said with a soft smile, still gazing at him as though she feared to lose a moment of his sight,—

"The moon will change soon, will it not, Mr. Haveloc?"

"To-morrow, I think," said he, kindly, not tenderly, for his was not a nature that could feign, though Margaret was too dizzy to mark the difference.

They were silent for a few moments, and then on some restless movement of Aveline's, he employed himself in altering the cushions.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who had been leaning her head against the mantel-piece as she sat, looked up at the slight noise which they made, and then dropped her head again, with that mute expression of anguish which the attitude can so eloquently convey.

"I hope you will not go away so early to-night, Mr. Haveloc," said Aveline, as soon as her pillows were properly arranged, "You went so very early yesterday, and it is of no use, for I do not sleep the sooner for it."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick raised her head, and cast a look at Mr. Haveloc as though she would have said, "humour her," but she sank into her former position without speaking.

"I am sure, as long as you are not tired," he said, "I will stay until Mrs. Fitzpatrick thinks proper to turn me out of doors."

"Is mamma asleep?" said Aveline, who was listening for her mother's voice.

"Asleep, my love!" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, in a tone that thrilled through Margaret, there was in it so much despair.

"We are all half asleep," said Mr. Haveloc. "Shall I ring for candles?"

"Do," said Aveline; "stay! do you see a figure—a shadow—there, in the verandah?"

Margaret heard no more. She turned, rushed from the terrace down the steps to the beach on the sands until the foam of the waves broke over her feet.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Hubert Gage, who had hastened after her. "What is it you intend? What are you going to do?"

"What should I do but go home?" said Margaret, turning quietly round. "I have seen what I came to see."

And turning away again, she began to walk rapidly.

"Speak to me," said he, after he had

followed her in silence for some time. "Tell me—am I to blame?"

Margaret shook her head.

"I cannot bear this silence," he said, after another pause. "Say something to me."

"What should I say?" asked Margaret, still walking on.

"Do you detest me?"

"You!—No."

They arrived before the gate of the cottage.

Margaret held out her hand to him.

"Good night," said she, in a calm voice. Let me see you to-morrow."

CHAPTER XIII.

Steig' empor, o Morgenroth, und röthe
Mit purpurnem Küsse Hain und Feld!
Säus'le nieder, Abendroth und Flöte
Sanft in Schlummer die erstorb'ne Welt;
Morgen—ach! Du röthest
Eine Todtensflor,
Ach! und du, o Abendroth! umflötest
Meinen langen Schlummer nur.

SCHILLER.

"THERE is no one in the verandah," said Mr. Haveloc, coming back to the side of Aveline. "It was your fancy. You have not yet forgotten the gipsy."

Aveline smiled, and signed to him to take a chair close to the sofa.

"I am easy now," she said. "I will not move again."

He looked anxiously at her, and thought there was something strange in the expression of her features. It seemed as if she had lost her control over them, and that her smile was involuntary.

"Mamma!" said she suddenly, in a quick, sharp tone.

Her mother hastened to her side.

"Keep close to me, mamma," she said.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick, seated on the side of the sofa, held her daughter's hand.

"Do you feel worse, my love?" she whispered.

"No; better," returned Aveline, in a clear voice.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick trembled excessively, but controlled all other sign of emotion. She looked anxiously at Mr. Haveloc, as she often did, to read his opinion. His eyes were fixed on the ground.

"Mr. Haveloc," said Aveline, in a voice perfectly free from emotion, "you will recollect to tell Mr. Fletcher that Mr. Lucas was very kind, and gave me much comfort."

"He returns to-morrow. I hope you

will be well enough to see him yourself," said Mr. Haveloc.

Aveline looked at him, and marked the unquiet expression of his face.

"See how few wishes I have," said she; "how everything has been anticipated by your kindness," turning her eyes upon her mother. "I have nothing left to say at this hour."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick, as white as marble, pressed her daughter's hand to her lips.

Mr. Haveloc, struck with awe at the presentiment which seemed to fall upon them all, did not venture to speak.

"Mamma—little Jane," said Aveline, after a pause.

"Yes, my love; you know we arranged that matter the other day," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, with wonderful calmness.

"Yes—yes," said Aveline.

"I think," said Mr. Haveloc, looking at Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "I had better ring for Mrs. Grant."

"Who's that?" asked Aveline quickly.

"It was I who spoke," said Mr. Haveloc. "I wished to send for your nurse, for I do not like you to be up at this hour."

"No — no; do not move me," said Aveline.

"It shall be as you like; but I know you will not sleep here," said Mr. Haveloc.

"No more sleep," said Aveline, as if to herself.

She remained with her eyes fixed on the ceiling, where, owing to some reflection of the lights, there was a broad luminous spot.

There was a long, deep silence. Mrs. Fitzpatrick was praying inwardly. Aveline still remained with her eyes uplifted, breathing short and quick.

All at once the stillness was broken by her voice repeating, in a distinct tone—

"'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff comfort me.'"

Those who have watched by a sick per-

son only can tell with what touching solemnity the words of Scripture will appear invested when coming suddenly from their lips in the stillness of night.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick's firmness gave way; she burst into tears. Aveline made no remark. She did not seem to notice her companions.

At last she said, in allusion to their conversation sometime ago.

"But nurse may come."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick rang the bell. Mrs. Grant entered; but Aveline was again abstracted.

The good old woman sat down behind the sofa, making a sign to them to be silent. She had seen for some days better than any one that the end was approaching.

"Is the tide down, Mr. Haveloc?" asked Aveline, with difficulty.

Mrs. Grant shuddered. The superstition, respecting the influence of the tides over the dying is well known. She

profoundly believed that her young lady would be released when the tide changed.

Mr. Haveloc walked to the window, and looked out. The long range of low green rocks, was not yet quite uncovered by the ebbing waves. The moom gleamed over their slippery surface, and the water rose and fell bubbling among their crevices.

"Not quite yet," said he coming back to the couch.

"Not quite yet," she repeated. Then with a stronger effort, she said, "I wished to thank you both."

"My dearest!" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick bending over her.

"You are not crying!" said Aveline, trying to draw her hand in a caressing manner over her mother's face; "not for me!"

"No, not for you, my child," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Mamma, it is coming," said Aveline, almost inaudibly.

"What, is coming, my love?" asked her mother.

Aveline made no answer—all her senses seemed to have failed her at once.

"God be praised!" said Mrs. Grant, rising with the dignity, that true emotion always gives: "God be praised! she is now an angel in Heaven!"

CHAPTER XIV.

And some will die, these are the gentle hearted,
Shook down like flowers by early frost: and some
Will grow in scorn and bitterness of heart,
As giving unto others, the full measure
Of that which hath been meted unto them.
Some look to Heaven, and garner up their hearts
Where disappointment cannot touch them more;
And these few are the wise; but there be many,
Whose life is stronger than their agony,
And one outlasts the other.—Pity them.

ANON.

As soon as it was possible the next morning, Hubert Gage, paid the visit that Margaret had almost demanded of him the evening before. The most favoured suitor might have felt gratified by the eagerness with which she evidently awaited his approach; for she was standing half way down the pathway of the garden, watching

him as he neared the cottage. His embarrassment was far greater than her own, he hardly dared raise his eyes to her face, and when he did so, he was as much startled by its steady and fixed expression, as by the icy paleness that overspread her features.

"I desired to see you again," she said, when he reached her, "I was very foolish and unreasonable, yesterday; and I was anxious that no friend of mine should go away with such an impression of me. I wished to meet you when I was calm again. You see, Mr. Hubert, that I consider you as a friend."

"A friend!" he exclaimed; "if the devotion of my whole life could supply—"

"Stop!" cried Margaret, in a tone of suffering, so much at variance with the even calmness of her first address, that he felt appalled by it. "If all you have ever professed for me has not been a mockery and an insult, you will spare me this. You will feel as securely as if the future were

the past, that I can never love again. You will not offend me, if you value the friendship and regard I have yet to give, by imagining that I can at any period listen to such language."

"Then, there is nothing but misery in store for both of us," said Hubert Gage.

"I do not look forward with so much despondency as you do, Mr. Hubert," said Margaret, "even now in the first anguish of discovery and despair; in all the shame and the agony of having been duped and trifled with—a suffering that you can never fully comprehend; I look forward more courageously than you do. Let me first speak of myself. I have often heard of a dream of entire happiness—a state of being, too brilliant to last; dispelled by accident, or misfortune, or death. My dream has been dispelled. All is over with me but life and its duties; but I have no suspense and I sometimes think that suspense is the only torture under which we cannot be still. Any thing else, believe me, Mr. Hubert, is endurable. I wake to a deeper sense of the

duties of life; the great lesson which we should ever learn by the loss of its pleasures. Let me urge the same thing upon you. You have, forgive me, in seeking a happiness that has been denied you, lost sight of all that is better than happiness. As I have been somewhat the cause of this, let me, if I can, atone it. Let me, if you esteem me—I hope you do—urge you to retrieve this great mistake. Let me entreat you to resume your profession—to direct your mind to subjects worthy of your energy and your talent. You know how you would delight your father by this determination; and let it be your great consolation, as it is mine, that when happiness is denied to ourselves, we have still the power of conferring it upon others; and while we keep in mind that there is a Heaven above us, let us not concern ourselves too deeply with the thorns beneath our feet."

As Margaret spoke with an earnestness of feeling that forced the tears from her

eyes, the soft but strong west wind brought distinctly to the porch where they sat, the sound of a passing bell.

The tones were so appropriate; they seemed so completely the echo of her sentiments, that both remained perfectly silent for some time. Margaret thought that her companion was moved by her words, for he remained with his face hidden in his hands; and still at intervals, the dull sound struck upon their ears.

"There," he said looking up at length, "that is the knell of the poor girl you saw yesterday."

"Is it?" said Margaret, "I envy her," and she dried her eyes once or twice; but she scarcely had power left to weep. She had passed half the night in tears, and she was now feeling the exhaustion which follows strong emotion. "But I am surprised;" she said, "I should never have imagined that she was as near her end. It is a very treacherous complaint. Is it not?"

"I believe so," he returned absently.

"The poor mother!" said Margaret, her voice trembling, "what sad distress there is all around us in this world, and others are suffering too, Mr. Hubert; there is no sorrow like the death of those we love."

"You are thinking of Haveloc," said her companion, "it galls me to hear you speak of him with compassion."

"And yet I think, Mr. Hubert," said Margaret, "that you would forgive your greatest enemy under such affliction, and even speak kindly of him; indeed, I am sure you would."

"I must go away," he exclaimed, "I cannot stand this. Every instant you make yourself more dear to me. I cannot resolve to abandon the hope of one day winning your regard."

"Shall I try and argue you out of it?" said Margaret, "shall I convince you that, like most quiet people my feelings are very tenacious; and that when I say I have done with love, I do not make use of the expression common to disappointed women, but

that I speak a determination that can never undergo any change. And yet I assure you, Mr. Hubert, that my friendship is worth having. For instance, I give you very good advice."

Margaret tried to speak cheerfully, but the smile would not come.

"I will follow it to the letter," said he; "you shall never see me again until I can say proudly that I have proved myself worthy of your interest. If all women would so use their influence"—He paused, unable, from emotion, to complete his sentence.

Margaret changed the subject.

"My uncle is better to-day than he has been for some time," she said, "I think the prospect of going home has wrought this change, and I hope that when he is once settled comfortably again at Ashdale, his improvement will be rapid."

"I hope so," said Hubert, "but my present anxiety is about yourself; how am I ever to hear of you?"

"If you are kindly anxious to learn how I am, I dare say Bessy will tell you as much in her letters," said Margaret; "but I expect my life to be so monotonous henceforth, that I shall furnish nothing but a bulletin."

"I must live upon that, then," he said. "*Well and Single.* That will be something for me to hear. And if I could not catch some of your fortitude," he added, looking admiringly at her calm face, "I should be unworthy of the name of a man. But you do not know how hard it is for me to leave you while you are looking so ill. You did not sleep last night."

"Sleep, no!" said Margaret, with *naiveté?*

"And I am afraid," said Hubert, "that you will not take proper care of yourself without some one to overlook your proceedings."

"There is one great cure for my ailments. "Time," said Margaret, tranquilly; "and I think his wings, or wheels will move

as well in your absence as in your presence, Mr. Hubert."

"That is true, I cannot hasten the movements of your physician," said Hubert, with a smile.

"That is right," said Margaret, rising, "let us part now, cheerfully."

"Well, but give me your commands," he replied, "you cannot tell the charm of following implicitly the direction of a person one loves."

"You know them, I think," said Margaret smiling, "you are to go to sea; and you are to remember the days, when every English gentleman was a scholar, as well as a soldier. And as you are a sailor, you will find no difficulty in following the examples of Elizabeth's reign. In fact, when I see you again, I shall find you very like your father. You must come in, and say good bye to my uncle, for perhaps when you return again to England, you may regret that you had not taken leave of so old a friend."

She passed into the house: her uncle was

in his arm chair, drawn close to the fire, he was as chilly as ever in that summer weather.

"Mr. Hubert Gage is come to take leave of you, uncle," said Margaret leaning over his chair.

"Oh! these leave-takings," said Mr. Grey turning and offering his hand to Hubert; "they are the worst part of life. And where are you going, my dear friend?"

"To sea, if I can get afloat," said Hubert.

"The very best thing in the world," said Mr. Grey. "Your father is delighted, is he not?"

"I do not think he knows of my resolution; it was rather sudden," said Hubert with some confusion of manner.

"Ah, indeed!" said Mr. Grey "and I am going home, Hubert."

There was a slight accent on the word "home" that quite unnerved poor Margaret.

"That poor child is not well," said Mr. Grey; "she distresses herself about my health; and sickness is almost the only

suffering that we cannot spare our friends. Well, good bye, and may God bless you!"

The tone was so much more solemn than was common with Mr. Grey, that it seemed like a last farewell.

Hubert Gage wrung his hand in silence, and left him.

The next day they set out on their return home. Mr. Grey was perfectly happy at the idea of seeing Ashdale again. Margaret was glad of change and motion. To her uncle's anxious inquiries, she always replied that she was pretty well, and he imagined that she looked so pale from her close attendance upon himself.

As they drew near Ashdale, he greeted each familiar object with as much satisfaction as if he had been absent for years instead of weeks. Every cottage, every brook, every turn in the road, aroused his attention.

Margaret shivered as the carriage drew up before the house; she dreaded the recollections which those familiar rooms would bring to her mind.

The fire was burning brightly in the drawing-room. Mr. Casement was standing on the hearth-rug. This circumstance completed Mr. Grey's satisfaction. It was really like home, with Mr. Casement at the fire-side.

Margaret trembling and shivering, and hardly able to restrain her tears, now crouched over the fire, which was as welcome to her as to her uncle

"Holloa, little woman! you are the invalid now, it seems," said Mr. Casement, marking her altered looks.

"The child is tired; don't talk to her, Casement," said Mr. Grey.

"Oh! have you heard the news of Master Claude?" asked Mr. Casement. "He has been courting again; that's all. I never knew such a fellow."

"Nonsense; I never listen to such reports," said Mr. Grey. "I don't believe one word of it!"

"Very well—ask old Warde; that's all. It was he who told me," said Mr. Casement,

persisting in his news because he saw it annoyed his old friend.

"I will never believe it; I know him better," said Mr. Grey.

"Well, well! I did not accuse him of any crime: did I, little woman?"

"Not at all, Sir," said Margaret steadily.

Mr. Grey looked at Margaret with a smile. He was re-assured by her calm voice, she no more believed the report than he did; so he turned the subject, and thought no more about it.

But his return home, to which he had looked forward with so much pleasure, did not produce the good effect he had wished and expected. He grew daily weaker, more unfit for exertion, either of mind or body. At last, when it became too great an exertion to leave his room, and when he was unable to sit up for more than a few hours in a day, he said to Margaret one evening that he had felt more languid than usual, "My child, I think you must write to Claude Haveloc. Tell him that I desire to see him without delay."

CHAPTER XV.

Oh ! sir, I did love you
With such a fixed heart, that in that minute
Wherein you slighted or betrayed me rather;
I took a vow to obey your last decree,
And never more look up to any hope,
Should bring me comfort that way.
Your suit to me,
Henceforth be ever silenced.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

MRS. FITZPATRICK was gifted with a mind of unusual strength; but for some days all the fortitude that she possessed, seemed to abandon her. She found, like many others, that often as she had pictured to herself what must come, all her imaginings fell far short of the desolation, and the anguish of the reality.

Mr. Haveloc took upon himself all those arrangements which are so painful to the survivors. She did not see him, but she occasionally sent him a few words in pencil expressive of her wishes. She had very few relations, and those few resided far in the north of Ireland; and the only connexion of her husband whom he had ever heard her name was Lord Raymond, whose estate of Wardenscourt lay within a few miles of his own. He wrote to this nobleman, giving him notice of Aveline's death, in common with the other relations; and greatly to his surprise, Lord Raymond answered his letter in person as soon as it was possible.

He was a very well-meaning man, and he thought that it would be a mark of attention to Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and to the memory of her husband, if he were to attend the funeral of their child; for they had so few connections left, that but for him she would have been followed to the grave by strangers.

He became Mr. Haveloc's guest for a week, and managed to pass the time

tolerably well considering that he was away from all his horses. In that retired spot, he did not feel obliged to confine himself to the house; he took to shooting sea-gulls, and obtained some little skill with the rifle. He watched over the Norwegian pony, and endeavoured to feel some interest in his proceedings; he helped Mr. Haveloc to feed him from the window with bread, and tried to bear in mind that he was a horse, and therefore an object of respect and importance. He wandered about the gardens and ate the fruit, and went out in a boat to visit the yacht; and expressed a wish to buy her, and gave up the idea, because he was not sure whether Lucy cared about cruising; and whenever his host appeared dejected, he endeavoured to condole with him, and very fortunately, was never able to do so, on account of his stammering.

And during the week that he stayed, he was known to write a letter; but lite-

rature was not his forte, and nobody ever saw him take up a book.

Whenever Mr. Haveloc went to the cottage to inquire after Mrs. Fitzpatick, he desired that his compliments and inquiries might be added to his own; and he usually inquired, at the same time, if Mrs. Fitzpatrick was not a very fine woman, adding that such was his recollection of her some years ago.

The day of the funeral arrived. Lord Raymond and Mr. Haveloc were the only persons who attended it.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick had desired to do so, but she had been peremptorily forbidden by her friend, Mr. Lindsay, and she acquiesced. Her spirit was too broken to attempt opposition, even in a thing of trifling importance.

She sent a few lines to Lord Raymond, thanking him for his kindness, but she declined the visit which he volunteered to pay her. She entertained a very reasonable estimate of the condolences of a stranger.

Two or three weeks elapsed before she

could nerve herself sufficiently to admit Mr. Haveloc; but, at last, fearing that he might leave the neighbourhood without her seeing him, she appointed him to come.

Mr. Lindsay was with her in the drawing-room; she looked dreadfully ill, and her hand was as cold as ice. Mr. Haveloc took a chair beside her, and in vain tried to speak. There was something so absolute in her bereavement, that he was dumb before her; he felt the influence, for the first time, of that grief that "makes its owner great."

It fell to Mr. Lindsay to sustain the conversation.

"So you have not parted with your yatch yet, Mr. Haveloc," he said, "we shall lose a pretty object when she leaves this part of the coast."

"No; I had nearly an opportunity of getting rid of her lately," said Mr. Haveloc, "I thought Lord Raymond would have—"

And he stopped suddenly, remembering that Lord Raymond had come to him expressly to attend Aveline's funeral.

" Ay—you find, like many other people, that it is much easier to purchase a toy than to part with it."

" Exactly."

" So many people want to sell, and so few care to buy," continued Mr. Lindsay.

" That is just the case."

" Do you know," said Mr. Lindsay, turning to Mrs. Fitzpatrick, as if it was a subject in which she must take a deep interest; " I feel sure we shall have a very fine autumn!"

" You think so! You are such an excellent judge of the weather," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick in a languid voice.

" I shall see the Pyrenees to advantage a month hence," said Mr. Haveloc.

" Ah! you are a traveller. It is singular that nobody stays at home now-a-days," said Mr. Lindsay. " I should like to know where you would see a finer country than your own?"

" I do not expect anything but novelty in my tour," said Mr. Haveloc.

"True. For you it is the best thing that could happen," said the doctor, with a look of commiseration. "Change of scene. Young people, my dear Mrs. Fitzpatrick, can run away from thought. You and I are obliged to trust to time alone."

It struck Mr. Haveloc that both the doctor, and Lord Raymond seemed to take for granted that he must have been attached to Aveline, for which, with his usual impatience, he set them down as idiots, and thought no more about it.

At last the doctor took his leave, and then Mrs. Fitzpatrick, turning to Mr. Haveloc, said to him with a steady voice, "I should like you, Mr. Haveloc, to take me to see Aveline's grave. I do not know where it is, and I could not ask any one else to point it out to me."

Mr. Haveloc consented directly. Mrs. Grant, who was still in the house, and came in with her mistress's walking-dress, was very reluctant that she should go. She

founded her objections upon the wet grass, and the quantity of rain that had fallen.

"My good, Mrs. Grant," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, as she fastened her shawl, "I wish a little damp grass could hurt me;" and turning to Mr. Haveloc, she repeated with a half smile. "When the mind's free, the body's delicate."

It was a soft fine evening. They walked slowly, and in silence towards the churchyard. Half hidden among the hills you descended the narrow shady lane, and came suddenly upon the quiet burying-ground, and small village church. The long shadows lay upon the graves; the rooks were wheeling and settling among the surrounding trees, and the rain had called out the mingled scent of flowers and shrubs from every thicket.

"It is very wet," said Mr. Haveloc, as they stepped on the long saturated grass.

"It does not matter," replied Mrs. Fitzpatrick. "Do you know," she added,

" that on the night of her funeral, I looked from my window, and was quite relieved to see the turf whitened by the broad moonlight. If the rain had beat on her grave that first night—but this is very weak."

" I cannot think so," said Mr. Haveloc. " I cannot believe that any of the natural feelings which we cherish for the remains of those who are dear to us, serve to be classed as weaknesses to be derided or overcome. I detest the philosophy which can analyse and reject the most sacred of our affections—that can strip death of the awe and the mystery which should protect and surround the breathless effigy destined to be immortal. A philosophy so blind that it sees but a heap of clay in the ashes that wait for the breath of God to summon them to Heaven!"

" You always feel strongly, you know," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick with a faint smile.

They had crossed the church-yard by this time, and stopped before a recent

grave. It was covered with white stone, and a cross of the same material carved in the early English fashion, bore the simple inscription of her name and age.

"Already!" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "I am surprised. I had no idea that it could have been done so soon."

"It was placed here two days after the funeral," said Mr. Haveloc. "I did not choose that the spot should remain unmarked."

At another time, Mrs. Fitzpatrick would have smiled at the self-will which her companion was apt to display even in trifles; and have wondered how much it would avail him in the serious business of life. But now she leaned upon the cross absorbed in her own painful thoughts; her mind wandered involuntarily from scene to scene of her daughter's illness and death. Every tone, every change of countenance presented itself in turn to her memory.

All was perfectly still. It was very rare for a footstep, except on Sundays, to cross

that lovely spot. One benefit arising from a thinly scattered population, is the decent repose afforded to the dead. Here, the graves were not crowded, and there was no need to disturb them for the new inmates. The old mounds sank level with the soil, and the grey crumbling stones fell in every variety of position over the ground. The old unclipped yew trees, feathered down to the earth, and sheltered the north side of the ground from the cold winds.

It was not infested, as in populous places, with the rude children of the lower classes, filling the place with discordant sounds and hideous gestures, and spurning with their coarse feet the earth that had been consecrated to so solemn a purpose.

At last, Mr. Haveloc interrupted the reverie of his companion.

"It is late," he said, "and you are quite wet I fear. Let me advise you to return home."

"Home!" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick mourn-

fully. "To what do I return? I am less solitary here, than I am in my own house."

"You must be persuaded," said he, leading her from the tomb. "Mrs. Grant will, I am sure, be wretched until she sees you again."

"It is true," said she, "I ought not to indulge in such feelings. How silent! How ineffably still! I feel so deeply the fitness and the luxury of this calm that surrounds the dead, now that I also have a treasure buried here."

They walked homewards. Their footsteps rustled in the long grass; and the latch of the wicket fell with a sharp sound, so deep was the quiet of the place.

At the gate of the cottage they met the postman; always late, and often very irregular in that village. He knew Mr. Haveloc by sight; and, glad to escape a walk to his residence, he touched his hat, and presented him with a letter.

The handwriting was Margaret's. He had often seen it, and admired its beauty, although she had never before written to him.

Knowing the conditions upon which Mr. Grey had agreed that she should write to him, he hesitated to open it. He knew it must contain bad news of his friend's health.

"But read it, Mr. Haveloc," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who had stood glancing over one or two indifferent letters, while he was hesitating. "You would not stand on ceremony with me."

He tore it open with trembling hands, and read the following lines:—

"I am desired by Mr. Grey to summon you to Ashdale. He is very ill; and I tell you now, because it is easier to write than to speak it; that we must meet and part as strangers.

"MARGARET CAPEL."

CHAPTER XVI.

Que es la vida? Un frenesi;
Que es la vida? Una ilusion,
Una sombra, una ficcion,
Y el mayor bien es pequeño.
Que toda la vida es sueño,
Y los sueños, sueño son."

LA VIDA ES SUENO, JORN. 2.

NOTHING could exceed his astonishment and distress as he read this short and decided missive. He stood speechless—rooted to the ground—for a few moments unable to believe his eye-sight. He would have staked more than his life upon Margaret's constancy; and at such a time to break with him—now, when her uncle lay, perhaps, dying. There was a refinement in

her cruelty. He could not comprehend a word; and stood staring in bewilderment on the paper in his hand.

"I fear you have received some bad news, Mr. Haveloc?" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, looking anxiously at him.

"I have—very bad," he said. "My friend, Mr. Grey, is very ill; dangerously, I am sure. I must not lose a moment: he has summoned me. I must set out instantly."

They exchanged a hurried farewell; and in another hour he was flying along the road as fast a four horses, and postilions, bribed to the utmost, could whirl his carriage.

He still held in his hand the letter which had summoned him to Ashdale. He read it again and again.

What could have occasioned this sudden change? He was lost in conjecture and dismay.

At one moment he thought it possible that some news might have reached her of

his attendance upon Aveline; and that she misinterpreted his visits into a devotion that had never swerved from herself. But he at once rejected this supposition as impossible.

Had she mistaken his conduct in that particular, she would have demanded an explanation. Nothing need have deterred her from doing so. She had heard from some officious friend of his attentions to Mrs. Maxwell Dorset, whose memory he frequently cursed, but never with such fervour as now. And her delicacy prevented her alluding to the cause of her resentment.

Anger succeeded here to distress. If she could cast him off for an affair which took place before he had become acquainted with her, she certainly was not worth the regret which he could not, however, entirely stifle. If her love could be snapped like a thread the moment she entertained any cause of displeasure against him, it was not worth preserving.

It was the most singular, certainly, the most unjustifiable step he had ever heard of. However, he had nothing to do but to acquiesce. It was not his part to overcome her unreasonable scruples. No ! he thanked Heaven, he could take the matter as coolly as she appeared to do. Her commands were certainly expressed with the utmost brevity — he supposed she did not consider him worth the waste of many words. Some ladies could dismiss a lover with more ease than a lap-dog. He commended her decision, and there was an end of the matter.

Having come to these reflections, he threw himself with great dignity into a corner of the carriage, and attempted to go to sleep.

Not succeeding in this attempt, the next best thing was to discover that he was going at a snail's pace, and to fly in a passion with the post-boys; and to work himself up into a fever of excitement that increased every mile of the way.

Suddenly he recollected the Will that he had induced Mr. Grey to make—a Will that deprived Margaret of what would have undoubtedly been her inheritance.

How little had he ever thought that any circumstance could occur which would lead him to regret such an arrangement. Now it must be cancelled without delay—a new Will made.

Good Heaven, if he should be too late! And he let down the front glasses, and bestowed another exordium on the postillions.

At last he reached Ashdale. It was one o'clock in the morning; the doors were opened as soon as the horses' feet were heard, a plain proof that he had been anxiously expected. He threw himself from the carriage and hurried up to the servant in the hall.

"Mr. Grey—"

"He is very ill, Sir; not expected to live till morning."

"Not till morning—good Heaven! and that Will—" he muttered to himself as he

rushed up-stairs. He thought more of Margaret than of Mr. Grey even then. Margaret was seated at the bedside close to her uncle's pillow; as still and as white as a figure moulded in wax. Her eyes were fixed upon his face; one hand rested in his; the other hung listless by her side. Mr. Casement stood leaning against the foot of the bed, looking, to do him justice, very disconsolate. Margaret lifted up her heavy eyes, and gave one look at Mr. Haveloc. He was in mourning; a token of respect he had thought proper to pay Aveline; the sight sent a thrill to her heart.

She leaned over her uncle, and kissed his forehead.

"My dear uncle, Mr. Haveloc," she whispered.

Mr. Haveloc stepped close to the bed, and took Mr. Grey's hand, which Margaret resigned to him.

"Ah, Claude!" said Mr. Grey with a faint smile.

They were the last words he spoke.

Almost directly afterwards he fell into a kind of doze; his eyes half closed.

Mr. Haveloc turned abruptly round, seized Mr. Casement by the arm and led him to the window. He had never addressed Mr. Casement in his life before, and that gentleman might be pardoned for looking extremely surprised on the occasion.

"Tell me—how is he?" said Mr. Haveloc.

"Anybody might see that with half an eye, I should think," muttered Mr. Casement more gruffly than usual, for he had a great mind to cry.

"Good Heaven, can nothing be done!" exclaimed Mr. Haveloc clasping his hands.

"Nothing at all," returned Mr. Casement. "The doctor left at eight o'clock, and Mr. Warde at ten. When the doctor and parson both go, I take it, there is an end of everything."

"Good Heaven! and I have something of the last importance to communicate to him!" exclaimed Mr. Haveloc.

"Ah, youngster! clever of you to leave it to the last," said Mr. Casement.

"Good Heaven! when I was away—when I did not know it before. It concerns his niece—"

"Oh! some rigmarole about Miss Peggy you may tell it to me. I am appointed one of her guardians."

Mr. Haveloc turned abruptly away, and stood by the bed-side, watching Mr. Grey with eager interest. At length, he thought it just possible that Margaret might have arranged everything with her uncle before writing to him.

"Did your uncle know of the resolution you announced to me in your letter of yesterday?" he asked coldly.

"Hush! no. Don't speak to him;" said Margaret shrinking back with an appearance of terror.

He sighed, and moved to a little distance from her chair. Mr. Casement came close to the bed, and he saw that all would soon be over.

Margaret sat paralysed with fear, watching the peculiar and earnest expression of the countenance which marks that when the senses are sealed, the soul is still awake, and waiting to be released. And it is at once awful and sublime when no pause or cessation of consciousness takes place, and the spirit steps from one existence to the other without an interval of slumber.

"Come little woman—come away;" said Mr. Casement taking her hand and raising her from her chair, "you can do nothing more. He will never see, or know any one again."

She had no power to resist; she would have opposed nothing. She suffered him to lead her in silence from the room; and so was spared the last appalling moment when the spirit vanishes from its human abode.

CHAPTER XVII.

Is there no more but parting left, of all
The love we bore each other? Is it easy
So to break trust and faith? Are all the tales
Of constancy, that make the heart beat high,
Mere fables?—Then, indeed, farewell!—'tis time.

ANON.

THE next morning Mr. Warde came early to Ashdale, and finding that all was over, he took Margaret home with him to the Vicarage.

She had sat up all night, and what with fasting and want of sleep, she was perfectly exhausted.

Mrs. Somerton and Blanche were at the Vicarage, and they were both very kind to Margaret. Indeed, many women not very

deserving of respect in their general conduct, are ready to show kindness to others under actual suffering.

Mrs. Somerton insisted on Margaret going to bed at once, and Blanche brought some tea to her bed-side as soon she was undressed. She kept her bed for some days. All that she had lately endured, unnerved her completely; and when, at length, she made the effort to rise, her limbs trembled so much, that it was with the utmost difficulty that she could get down stairs; and there seated in an arm-chair, she remained for some hours every day, unable to undergo the fatigue of speaking, or even of listening to what was passing.

When Mr. Grey's Will was read, it was found that he bequeathed his estate to his cousin, Mr. Trevor of the East India Company's service; an annuity to one or two servants; and a legacy of ten thousand pounds to his niece Margaret Capel. Margaret was very much affected when Mr. Warde told her this piece of news; she

repeated over and over again how very kind it was of her uncle to have left her this money; a trait which pleased Mr. Warde very much, for he was afraid she would have been very greatly disappointed that her uncle had not left her the bulk of his property. However, a great many people kindly undertook to be disappointed for her; and to say that it was a shame in Mr. Grey, after having her to live with him, to treat her in that manner, and cut her off with ten thousand pounds; and that old people never knew how to leave their money so as to give satisfaction to their relations; which is true enough.

Nobody knew that it was Margaret's own fault; that she was in the secret, and that a word from her, after her rupture with Mr. Haveloc, would have caused her uncle to alter his Will, and settle all his property upon her; but her one aim was to spare him the knowledge of an event which would give him pain; she never thought about securing his fortune. Mr. Warde

told her that he and Mr. Casement were named as her guardians until she married or became of age; and that he thought her best plan would be to reside with some lady who might be able to offer her a comfortable home, and desirous to profit by the arrangement; that such a person would be easily found, but that he trusted for the present she would remain at the Vicarage; so that they might look about at their leisure, and select the residence that should present the most advantages. Margaret thanked him very much for his kindness; for the future she felt a sort of vague indifference. She acceded, at once, to his plans, and hardly gave another thought to her prospects.

Blanche Somerton who had been excessively kind, even delicate in her attentions, until after the funeral of Mr. Grey, now began to think that Margaret's languid sorrow was a little out of place. She was one of the many who think that all regrets are quite useless and nonsensical as soon

as the dead are buried. Her own emotions were stormy and brief; and she felt good-naturedly that it was high time to begin to cheer up Margaret's spirits.

"I declare, I envy you of all things;" said she one morning, "with twenty thousand pounds you can surely make a very good match. But it all depends upon where Uncle Warde places you; take my advice and don't go to a Methodist. I would get some dowager at Bath, or Cheltenham to take me out, if I were you. You might meet with something very advantageous at Bath; better I think than in London. There is so much competition; though you are certainly very pretty—not that I like you in mourning."

Here Margaret who was reclining languidly in an arm-chair, began to cry, by stealth as it were, wiping her eyes quietly with her handkerchief.

"Oh! my dear, your spirits are wretched," cried Blanche. "You have no idea how it distresses me to see you. You really ought

to go out and amuse yourself; we have all our troubles, I assure you. I sometimes find it very difficult to bear up."

"Yes; I should be selfish, indeed, if I thought myself the only person afflicted," said Margaret. "I am very sorry to hear that you have any immediate cause of distress."

Here Mr. Warde appeared at the doorway; he made a sign to Blanche, and after a few whispered words, that young lady nodded, and went up stairs. Mr. Warde then came up to Margaret, and took a chair by her side.

"My dear," he said, "Mr. Haveloc wishes to see you."

Margaret's heart beat so wildly that she could hardly breathe.

"I thought, as he was an intimate friend of your uncle, I had better prepare you for his visit," said Mr. Warde. "I feared you would be agitated if he came in without being announced."

"Must I see him?" asked Margaret, as soon as she could utter a word.

"Certainly not, if you feel the effort would be too great," said Mr. Warde. "He seemed very anxious to pay his respects to you, before leaving the place. I understand it is his intention to go abroad for some years: and I suppose having met you frequently at your uncle's, he did not wish to quit the country without taking leave of you. But do not, on any account, exert yourself. I will take him a message, if you feel in the least degree unequal to seeing him."

Margaret laid her hand on Mr. Warde's arm as if to detain him. Everything seemed whirling round; she could not hear distinctly his last words; there was a noise and giddiness in her brain. Going abroad! So then all was over; he was as determined as herself to cancel their engagement. She should have liked a little reluctance, a little hesitation; perhaps a little entreaty. But

this was well. She could be proud now—no weakness.

"Is he here?" she asked Mr. Warde.

"Yes, waiting in my study."

"Then let him come directly," said she, "directly; because I am not in a mood for tears now; and because I could not answer for myself half an hour hence."

Mr. Warde pressed her hand, and went out in search of Mr. Haveloc.

Margaret heard his step with a sickening at the heart that she could not control: he came in—bowed, took a seat at some distance; then started up, brought his chair closer, and sat down beside her.

They were both silent, Margaret struggling with her tears. Mr. Haveloc looking on the ground, perfectly uncertain how to begin.

But after a short pause, during which she clasped more tightly the arm of her chair, Margaret forced back her tears, and said in a low tone:—

"We have both lost so much, and so lately, Mr. Haveloc, that we do not find it easy to allude to it."

She had never seen him look so pale, or so wretched, and she felt that she forgave him everything, though she struggled very hard against the feeling. Unconsciously her voice took a softer tone, and her countenance depicted the compassion she felt. But her companion, quite as much offended as grieved, by her rejection, had not the skill to read these signs of a softened resolution.

"I did not intrude upon you with that intention," he said. "I had something to explain to you which is a source of greatdistress to me, but for which I can find no remedy."

Margaret bent forward with much anxiety, Mr. Haveloc proceeded with increased coldness.

"When I had reason to suppose that you intended to honour me with your hand, I requested Mr. Grey to settle his estate upon his next heir, as I imagined I had more

than enough for all our wishes; and I confess, that it pleased my pride to fancy that through my means, alone, the woman whom I loved, should be surrounded by all the luxuries and refinements of life."

"I know," said Margaret. "He told me what had been done. I was glad of it. I cannot think why that should annoy you."

"It pains me to consider myself as the means of having deprived you of a noble fortune," said Mr. Haveloc, "a fortune which I once vainly thought I should have been able to compensate to you. But I was not aware that you knew this, and I feared you should think your uncle fickle or unkind, instead of ascribing the act to my ill-judged reliance—upon the future."

"You acted quite rightly, Mr. Haveloc," said Margaret. "I wished it then, and I am not more disposed to reject it now. Mr. Trevor is a worthy man, with a young family. He will value his inheritance; and I trust only that he will cherish my uncle's memory as warmly as I ever shall."

She found it difficult to keep her voice quite steady, just at the close; but she made a little pause and succeeded.

"As you have not deigned to give me any explanation of your change of purpose," said Mr. Haveloc. "I am at a loss to defend myself; or to plead for what, in truth, is very near my heart. There is, indeed, one passage in my life to which it is possible your motives may refer; in that case, I should, I avow it, be left defenceless. I cannot undo the past!"

"I know it," said Margaret hurriedly; "I should be sorry if—I mean that I wish to forget entirely—all that—I mean, that we were ever on other terms than—"

"I have no doubt that you will succeed perfectly," said Mr. Haveloc, rising from his chair as he spoke.

There was a touch of irony in the remark which stung her to the quick. When all she had undergone, and had yet to endure, was before her, to be told that she would find it easy to forget the past, was unbear-

able. Her heart swelled, but there is a great deal of endurance in a woman; as many people know, for they put it to a pretty good trial.

All the pride in her nature was aroused.

"You have nothing more to say, I believe," said she, drawing herself up.

"I could say a thousand things," he exclaimed, with a passionate change of manner; "if I thought you had the patience to hear me. But you care nothing for my thoughts; and, perhaps, I merit but little consideration. Still from you—but these storms always come from the quarter on which we are least prepared. You scarcely know what you do in casting me off. But I hope I am not so much the slave of circumstances as to be made reckless by misfortune. And you, Margaret, is it—in all the chances of the future—is it likely that any man will love you as I have done?"

Mr. Haveloc!" said Margaret, still more offended.

"And that unhappy Will!" he continued,

"I suffer more from that subject than you would be willing to believe if I were to describe it: one day you will lay that to my other offences—if, indeed, you then can recal my name."

"You do me great injustice in thought," said Margaret. "If it will be any relief to you, let me assure you again that there is nothing in the whole chapter of accidents which could give me so little concern. I am not called upon to bear poverty, recollect."

"Then," said Mr. Haveloc, "we have but to part. How difficult it is to me, no words could speak—but those things which are inevitable, had best be quickly done. So—farewell."

Without another word, or look, or gesture, he rushed out of the room and from the house.

Margaret sat for some time trying to recollect every thing he had said. He had not asked her to forgive him—had simply

said he could not undo the past; he had not begged, as he might have done, that she would give him time and opportunity to retrieve it. It had seemed that he was willing—even anxious, to be set free—he had made arrangements before seeing her, that proved he had decided this to be their last meeting. She was dead—and therefore he might have endeavoured to return to Margaret, if he had desired a reconciliation. But no—she had offended him, and he was too proud to wish it. Margaret tried to think it was best for both; but a sense of agony, amounting almost to suffocation, would not let it be. If she could have wept—but no tears came—so she lay helplessly in her chair, watching the ebony cabinet that stood opposite first receding farther and farther, then seemed to float before her eyes, until sense and memory went out together, and she fell into a deep swoon.

It was some time before Blanche, who came down as soon as Mr. Haveloc left the

house, could restore Margaret to consciousness. When she succeeded, she was full of condolence.

"What a bore it was, my dear creature," said she, "that you should have had to receive that horrid man. Had it been any one else, it might have done you all the good in the world; for you might have had a nice little flirtation to raise your spirits. But as for him—I hate him; his manners are so abrupt. Of course he began talking of poor dear Mr. Grey. So mal-à-propos."

"He did speak of my uncle," said Margaret.

"I knew it!" exclaimed Blanche. "That was it. I wish there was a nice little dance you could go to; or a concert—but this place is a perfect hermitage; and your mourning too would be a drawback. How beautifully you were dressed at Bessy Gage's wedding. You had a cluster of pink daisies at the side of your bonnet. That was an

excellent match! I would have almost married old Sir Philip, myself, for the sake of Sherleigh. I say, did Hubert Gage ever make you an offer?"

Margaret blushed, but astonishment kept her silent.

"Every body says he did," continued Blanche, "and I do not wonder that you refused him. I hate younger sons. Mamma wished me to marry him at one time, but I declined. I almost wish now that I had kept him on, just to pique somebody else. Do you like military men?"

"No." said Margaret.

"Well, I wonder at that," said Blanche. "I think I could make you change your mind. Did you happen to notice me walking with a young man, in the garden, yesterday before dinner?"

"No, I was up stairs," said Margaret, faintly.

"Well—if you can manage to walk out to-morrow—do you think you could?"

"No, I am sure I could not."

"That is a pity, because I often meet him on the S—— road. You would be so much amused with him. He has such spirits, and I should not be jealous, no—Watkins is all my own."

At another time Margaret would have laughed at this declaration; now, she sighed heavily and sank back in her chair.

"You are quite fatigued with that wretch Mr. Haveloc; it was just like my uncle to admit him. However, thank goodness he is going to Russia directly, and will not bore you again. But here comes my uncle; not a word about Watkins, I entreat. We keep it a secret from him, but I will take care that you are in the way the next time he comes to the house."

"I will go up stairs and lie down, if you please," said Margaret, trying to rise. "I am not very well."

Blanche helped Margaret up stairs, and she had another attack of illness, which again confined her to her bed for some days.

CHAPTER XVIII.

How slowly do the hours their numbers spend,
How slowly does sad Time his feathers move!

SPENSER.

Mathilden's Hertz hat niemand noch ergründet—
Doch, grosse Seelen dulden still.

DON KARLOS.

MRS. SOMERTON had kindly offered, as soon as ever she learned the particulars of Margaret's situation, to take the charge of her, and treat her like one of her own daughters.

But Mr. Warde did not seize the proposition with the eagerness that it might seem to merit. Perhaps, he thought, that if Margaret was no better treated than Mrs. Somerton's daughters, her life would

not be all sunshine; perhaps he feared that the lady would not scrupulously redeem her pledge; at any rate, he informed his sister decidedly, that it was his intention to place Margaret with some lady who had no children; for he thought it would be difficult, if not impossible, for any other to adjust satisfactorily, the claims of her daughters and her guest. Mrs. Somerton tried to argue the point, but Mr. Warde was firm, and wrote to one or two friends describing the sort of home he desired for Margaret.

Blanche was so much occupied with her military friend, her Watkins, as she called him, that Margaret saw less of her than before. She walked out in every direction in the hope of meeting him, she staid at home all day, if she thought he would call; she took an immense deal of trouble to catch what a good many people would have pronounced to be not worth catching—her Watkins was ignorant, profligate, and silly; and very fortunately for Blanche, he

behaved to her like most other officers ; that is to say, he walked off one fine morning with his regiment, without so much as bidding adieu to his lady love. Margaret knew nothing of this distressing event when she rejoined the family—she had not seen Blanche for the last day or two, and now she found her reclining on the sofa, suffering, as Mrs. Somerton told her, from a nervous attack. "That is hard upon you, Mrs. Somerton," said Margaret, "to have two invalids on your hands. I must make haste and get well to relieve you of part of your charge."

"I am sure, my dear Miss Capel," said Mrs. Somerton, "no invalid ever gave so little trouble as you. I only wish Blanche would imitate your patience."

Margaret drew a low chair to the sofa, and took her work; "are you suffering in your head?" she asked Blanche, in a gentle voice.

"No, not much ; I'm glad you are come down," said she. "It will be somebody

to talk to; that is a very pretty pattern for a plain collar. I like the black studs down the front. Do you waltz?" But here the recollection of having waltzed with Lieutenant Watkins overcame her, and she became rather hysterical. Mrs. Somerton scolded her, Blanche got angry, and then order was restored. Mrs. Somerton took Margaret to the window, and whispered to her the state of the case, and then Blanche called out to her, mother and scolded her for having told Margaret when she wanted to tell her all about it herself. Margaret turning her eyes full of wonder from one to the other, could scarcely comprehend that Blanche was suffering from a disappointment; she contrasted the total desolation of her own feelings, with the frivolous annoyance that the other seemed to endure, and could understand nothing of the case.

Quiet was again restored. Mrs. Somerton plied her worsted work. Margaret netted in silence. Blanche, lying on the

sofa, was eating French chocolate. Presently Mrs. Somerton began to count aloud the stitches in the bunch of grapes, she was working, "thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight, thirty-nine."

A burst of crying from Blanche, louder than anything Margaret had heard, except from a baby; Mrs. Somerton had inadvertently named the number of Mr. Watkins's regiment.

The fresh scolding, fresh sobs, and, at last, a glass of sal-volatile, tranquillised her spirits for the present.

It must be admitted that such scenes were rather fatiguing to a young girl in bad health, and suffering deeply from the reality of which this was but the shadow.

She learned, however, to set some value upon her own power of self-command. She could not help feeling that the unrestrained sorrow of Blanche lost in dignity what it gained in publicity.

Mason knew all about it; and frequently alluded to poor Miss Somerton with pity;

and to Mr. Watkins with all the violence which a waiting-woman is pretty sure to feel towards a man who has thwarted a young lady in her laudable endeavours to get married.

In two or three days Margaret was happy to find that Blanche could talk of waltzing without a sigh; and her mamma might safely count threads from thirty to forty without awakening any painful reflections.

But their ensued another annoyance to poor Margaret. Whenever she was alone with Blanche, which was the greatest part of the day, Mr. Watkins was the one topic of conversation.

When she had heard all about his boots, and his eyes, and his way of carving a chicken, and his wastefulness in gloves, (a great merit in the eyes 'of Blanche,) she naturally hoped that they had come to an end of the list; but it is quite surprising the number of little anecdotes which this gentleman furnished.

There were all his jokes to repeat; and these were so exceedingly stupid, that they really did make Margaret smile sometimes. And then there were several stories of dishonest actions, which she was expected to laugh at, but which she could not, for very disgust.

Once he had taken in a Jew; this was his chef-d'œuvre; and twice he had cheated a friend in the sale of a horse; and Blanche thought this greatly enhanced his merit, and her loss.

She became rather tearful when she mentioned the last theft; but she presently recovered herself, and turned the conversation upon a satin pelisse she was about to buy. In fact, the future and the past pretty equally divided her mind. The loss of Mr. Watkins, and the arrangement of her dresses for the autumn.

"Do you know, the last time poor Watkins called, he was so intoxicated!" cried Blanche. "I was afraid my uncle would have noticed it; but, fortunately, he only

came in for a few minutes; for Watkins staid to luncheon. I never shall forget his trying to carve the cold lamb."

"Then that was the reason," said Margaret, hesitating, "that you broke with him."

"Mercy on me, my dear! where were you brought up;" cried Blanche, laughing. "What! break with a man because he was a little intoxicated? Not I, believe me!"

Margaret found plenty of things to astonish her in Miss Somerton; but she was a little more startled than usual at this remark.

She thought of the disgust she would have felt if she had ever seen Mr. Haveloc intoxicated. She viewed Blanche's attachment as a sort of natural phenomenon.

Mr. Watkins lasted about a fortnight; during that time very few things could be said or done without suggesting to Blanche some little anecdote of this gentleman; and as these tales generally tended to set

forth either some deficiency, or some positive vice in that faithless person; sometimes calling in question his spelling, and sometimes his morality, Margaret felt often desirous to turn the subject for very shame; but Blanche informed her that it was a comfort to talk about him, and she could not reasonably refuse her that source of consolation.

At the end of the fortnight, Blanche admitted to Mrs. Somerton, that "Watkins" had a red nose. This had been a point strongly contested between mother and daughter for the last fourteen days previous; for Mrs. Somerton thought it her duty to depreciate a man who had failed to make her daughter an offer; and Blanche warmly defended him from a charge which his decided talent for drinking rendered, at least, probable.

The cause of this change was very soon explained. Blanche had found another officer. She had been introduced to him

at a friend's house, and she very soon managed to bring him to the Vicarage.

When he had nothing in the world to do, it was amusing enough to lounge away a morning, flirting with Blanche. This was worse than the other annoyance to Margaret.

It was bad enough to hear incessantly of the absent lover; but now, you had not only to hear of him all day long in his absence, but to bear his presence, at least, three days in the week. And Blanche would insist upon Margaret's keeping her company.

"Don't run away, my dearest creature," said she; "it looks so odd; it really seems as if you thought the man wanted to propose to me."

Margaret had began to enjoy her walks in the pretty garden and quiet meadows of the Vicarage. It was a bright, fresh October. She was always alive to the beauties of the country; but how could she enjoy

the mossy walks and tall rustling trees with the constant fear of being joined by that tiresome Mr. Compton. And then, if she sat, Blanche would insist on sitting too. If she said she felt chilly and began to walk again, up started Blanche and her cavalier, and they all three set off walking together.

And this Mr. Compton was afflicted with the most boundless and uncultivated spirits. His laugh was a shriek. He would spring up in the air like a stag; he would fall on the grass, to give vent to his mirth; he talked incessantly, and always the most extravagant nonsense. He would practice dances with Blanche, while poor Margaret played to them; and then, at every mistake, there were fresh fits of laughter, which made him stamp about the room until they subsided.

Margaret at first thought him deranged, and was very much afraid of him; but she afterwards found he was only silly; which is a much milder form of lunacy.

Indeed, he was much more silly than his predecessor; for in due time, Blanche managed to receive his hand, and became Mrs. Compton, whether he liked it or not; but this was after Margaret had left them. Perhaps, Margaret would have endured him more cheerfully, had she been able to foresee the finale of his visits. It would have been unkind, indeed, to murmur at the tedious hours which he spent at the Vicarage, which proved a source of such intense delight to Blanche, and such comfortable calculation to her mother.

"Has he not eyes!" exclaimed Blanche, as the door closed upon him after a waltz of two hours.

Margaret (who had officiated as pianiste during that time) admitted that he possessed that feature in the plural number, and knelt down before the fire to warm her hands.

"I have ascertained," said Mrs. Somerton, looking up from her worsted work, "that he *is* the son of Mr. Compton of

Lincolnshire—the second son, it is true, but I understand the mother's property is settled on him; if that is the case, it may do, but I will write to Mrs. Stacey, she knows all about the Comptons. You know he mentioned Mrs. Stacey as having been staying at his father's."

"I know," said Blanche, "and how he did laugh at her blue gauze turban!—I thought he would have died."

So did Margaret; though she did not contemplate that event with the dismay that it might awaken in Blanche's mind.

"Only," continued Mrs. Somerton, "don't go too far till we hear from Mrs. Stacey; he may have nothing."

"I dare say," retorted Blanche, "I shall go as far as I like. I know he has property, and I don't care whether it came from his mother, or from the moon. He was saying, yesterday, what year it was when he came of age. Don't you know, Margaret, how he laughed about his eldest brother coming of age first, and then his coming of age

afterwards; and saying that it was not every family where two brothers come of age? Of course nobody comes of age if they have nothing to come into."

"Certainly, there is something in that," said Mrs. Somerton, resuming her worsted work: while Margaret became possessed of the interesting fact, that time suspends his operations in favour of those forlorn gentlemen and ladies only, who have no means of bribing his delay; and truly they should have something to compensate for an empty pocket.

But Mr Compton was of great use to Margaret, little as she might have been disposed to allow it. If he did not come, Blanche was expecting him all the morning; every horseman, every gig, that passed down the high-road, might be the looked for guest. A broad gravel walk, at the end of the garden, commanded a view of the high-road, and thither Blanche would direct her steps, and loiter from breakfast till luncheon.

"There! that *is* Compton—I am certain, my dear, I know him a mile off; besides, his horse, he rides a bay—now does not he?"

"I do not remember. Yes—I think it was a bay when you took me out to see it," said Margaret.

"Well, then, unless he were riding the black—he has a very fine black horse, which he thinks would carry a lady," said Blanche looking sideways at her companion.

"But that is not Mr. Compton—it is the butcher," said Margaret, with a feeling of satisfaction.

"Oh! true—so it is. I am rather near-sighted. By the bye, I think he said he should be on duty to-day. Did he say to-day or to-morrow?"

"I did not hear him," said Margaret.

"I think it was to day; I am sure I wish he never had any duty!" said Blanche with a sigh.

"He has very little, I should think," said Margaret.

"He gets out of every thing he can, you may be sure," said Blanche, "there—who is in that gig. Only Charles Hollingsworth, I do believe! The greatest bore in England; sometimes he pretends to be ill, and goes out hunting."

"Who, Mr. Hollingsworth?" said Margaret, quite at a loss to know why he should take that trouble.

"No—Compton—there he really is; let us go to the gate and meet him."

Then when he came, there was nothing but uproar and confusion for some hours; Blanche's spirits were easily excited, and what with laughing, waltzing, rushing over the garden after his dogs, and pelting the plums from the trees, and racing about and throwing them at each other, she became quite as noisy as her lover. Mrs. Somerton looked on, scolding them both gently and playfully; it was quite a family picture.

All this clamour was not very amusing to Margaret, but it drew her thoughts insensibly away from herself, she even became interested in the game. She speculated upon Blanche's chance of success. Her stake was not deep enough to make it a matter of painful anxiety. She would have regretted Mr. Compton, just as much as she had regretted Mr. Watkins; perhaps a few days longer, for he was decidedly the more attractive of the two. He had not a red nose, he did not drink, he was only foolish and extragavant, and very noisy. He treated Margaret with that total disregard to the usual courtesies offered in society to a lady, that may be observed in young men, especially officers, when they are occupied by another woman: but this gave her neither concern nor displeasure. She had long observed that his head was not capable of holding more than one idea at a time, and as Blanche was his idea at present, it was not likely that he should recol-

lect to open the door for Margaret, or to set down her tea-cup.

But she began to look with anxiety towards a more settled home—the society here was not to her taste. She saw very little of Mr. Warde, and she was not allowed to pass her time in his library; she was always wanted to be present with Blanche and Mr. Compton. She longed for quiet, for study; for a life that should replace that which she had lost.

CHAPTER XIX.

No more endure to weigh
The shame and anguish of the evil day
Wisely forgetful! O'er the ocean swell
Sublime of Hope, I seek the cottaged dell
Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray;

COLERIDGE.

MARGARET was cheered during this tedious interval by several very kind letters from Lady d'Eyncourt. As soon as she heard of Mr. Grey's death, she wrote to Margaret a letter full of deep feeling and sympathy. She said that when she returned to England, she counted on Margaret's taking up her abode at Sherleigh, unless before that time she was fixed in a home of her own. She was happier than most married women can expect to be, for

she was not separated from her father. Captain Gage was now at Paris, with the D'Eyncourts, and he had agreed to travel with them, as long as they remained on the continent. Elizabeth mentioned in one of these letters, that her brother Hubert had sailed for South America, and that her father was very glad to get him out of the country; but it was evident that she did not know who had influenced his decision.

Margaret was cheered by this intelligence. She would have dreaded meeting him again, at least, for some time to come; and she was glad to find that she had been able to do some good by her advice.

One morning, Mr. Warde begged Margaret to come into his library as he wished to speak to her on business. Blanche and Mr. Compton were playing at battledore and shuttlecock, and she was not sorry to escape from their noisy enjoyment for a few minutes. Mr. Warde then told her that he had made several inquiries for such

a home as he thought might be agreeable to Margaret; that he had found it rather difficult to meet one in all respects satisfactory. But that he had just received a letter from his friend, Mr. Fletcher, that he thought was worth considering about. Mr. Fletcher, if she remembered, was the clergyman to whom he had applied when her uncle desired to take a house by the seaside.

Yes; Margaret recollected the name. She breathed short; one of those feelings called presentiments came over her. She knew perfectly what was coming.

"It seems," continued Mr. Warde, glancing at the letter, "that a lady in his neighbourhood has lately lost an only daughter, and she has been strongly urged to receive an inmate into her house; she is much averse to a companion in the usual sense of the term, but upon Mr. Fletcher stating to her the sort of home I was anxious to obtain for you, she seemed

willing to receive you. You know the neighbourhood, and you are fond of fine scenery, but I must warn you that this lady lives absolutely without society. She is very well connected, but she has retired from the world."

The world—of which her short experience had been so bitter. That, indeed, was an inducement; and Aveline's mother—there was a sort of strange charm to her in the idea.

"I think I should like it," she faltered.

"This lady is a highly cultivated and intellectual woman," said Mr. Warde, "and I think you will appreciate the advantage of her conversation; no lessons are of such real benefit to a young person, as constant intercourse with a superior mind. And her principles are such as you know how to value and respect."

"Let me go to her," said Margaret.

"Can you make up your mind to solitude?" asked Mr. Warde.

"Oh! yes—yes."

"Then I will write to Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and conclude the arrangement."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Blanche, when Margaret repeated to her what had been determined upon. "I wonder what my uncle thinks women are intended for; that is to say, pretty women. Of course, ugly women ought to be buried alive. But the idea of sending you into a wilderness like that. Oh! you like it? Don't tell me—I won't believe you; how are you to get married I should like to know?"

"But I have no intention of marrying," said Margaret. "I intend to remain single."

"You don't mean to—oh! I understand," returned Blanche. "A good many girls say so; but I always think it is better not, for fear the men should take you at your word."

"I wish to be taken at my word," said Margaret quietly.

"So it really would seem," said Blanche,

"by your suffering my uncle to dispose of you in that way. Oh! I wanted to tell you; my uncle begins to think it odd, that Compton comes here so much. I believe he was afraid that you were his attraction, and it is his business to look sharp after your money, you know."

Margaret could not repress a feeling of disgust, but she tried to look as if Mr. Compton's assiduities would not be very offensive to her. Blanche went on.

"I soon set him right on that point, and then he actually asked mamma, if she was quite assured of Mr. Compton's principles. He said he hoped he had no particular prejudice against the army, but he thought their manner of living was seldom such as to gain them much respect in any neighbourhood where they might be quartered. How I did laugh!"

"But do you not then think principles of any importance?" asked Margaret.

"No, my dear, of course not," returned Blanche. "I think Compton very hand-

some, and if he were a Roman Catholic, it would make no difference to me."

Margaret did not think it of any use to explain that a Roman Catholic might possibly have high religious principles, and a Protestant, none at all, so she was silent.

"I told Compton about the principles," continued Blanche, "and you should have heard how he laughed; I thought he would have died."

This must have been a prevalent fear among Mr. Compton's friends whenever he favoured them with a burst of laughter.

"However," said Blanche, "Compton told me to set my uncle's mind at rest as soon as I liked, for that he was 'the same religion that every body else was.'"

The grammatical arrangement of this sentence was, perhaps, its least charm. So profound a knowledge of the various doctrinal shades then agitating the world must have been very cheering to Mr. Ward's feelings.

"And," said Blanche, "even Compton says that it is a great shame you should be banished to that stupid place in ——— shire. For he says you are exceedingly pretty, only too quiet for his taste. You don't mind, I hope?" added Blanche, fearful that these last words would be too severe a blow.

No. Margaret thought she should manage to survive this expression of Mr. Compton's opinions, in common with several others with which he had made her acquainted from time to time; and of which, perhaps the most striking was, that "he hated black, and he thought it a shame for women to wear it." And on being reminded that it was sometimes indispensable, he then thought it "a shame for people to die."

Nothing refreshed Margaret so much as a letter from Elizabeth. She seemed to come in contact with another order of mind. Elizabeth never thought or spoke a littleness, and however short, or however

general her letter might be, the nobleness of her nature seemed to find its way into the handwriting.

In a letter Margaret received from her at this time, she mentioned that they had been surprised, at Paris, by a flying visit from Mr. Evan Conway. He was on his road to the Pyrenees; and had been disappointed of his travelling companion. Mr. Haveloc had arranged to go with him, and suddenly sent him an excuse, saying that some recent occurrences had rendered him unfit for society. "This tribute to the memory of your uncle, my dear Margaret, I am sure will please you, added Elizabeth. I always thought Mr. Haveloc's character no ordinary one; but this is a depth of feeling which we rarely meet in the present day.

"He has started off alone for St. Petersburg, and has left a good many English mammas to conjecture whether he will bring home a Russian wife."

Elizabeth added that the rest of the

Conway family were in Germany, where they seemed likely to remain some time.

Margaret pondered long over the intelligence contained in this letter. Was it solely grief for her uncle's loss that made Mr. Haveloc decline the society of his friend? Did no remorse for his falsehood to herself mingle with his regrets? Did he suffer half what she endured? She knew nothing, she should never know anything of his feelings. They were parted for ever; and, perhaps, as Elizabeth said, he might bring home a Russian wife.

This idea cost her many tears, though she constantly repeated to herself that she had no longer any interest in his future.

Mr. Warde received a favourable answer from Mrs. Fitzpatrick. From his account of Miss Capel, she felt assured of her own satisfaction in the arrangement. She only feared that so young a person would soon be wearied of the monotony of her residence. On this point, Margaret was sanguine. She had much pleasure in telling Mason that

the day of her departure was fixed. Mason lifted up her eyes; even Ashdale was better than the place they were going to: "but it did not become her to complain."

Margaret bought the costliest bracelet that the jeweller in S—— could furnish as an offering for Blanche before she left.

"Accept it as a wedding present," she said, "I trust it may prove so, if it is for your happiness."

Blanche was in raptures—she dearly loved trinkets, and a bracelet of the newest fashion glittering with precious stones, and costing more guineas than she ever possessed at a time, was almost enough to disturb her brain. She ran from room to room to show it to everybody; she put it on; she took it off. She embraced Margaret, she laughed, she waltzed, and finally was able to reply to Margaret's remark.

"You dear creature—that is the kindest thing you could say! A wedding present! Yes! I will believe it; he has said nothing, but I understand what he means. Did you ever happen to observe his nose in profile?"

Margaret had merely remarked that there was something elegant in the sharpness of his features that seemed at variance with the excessive ignorance of his mind; but she forbore giving so candid a statement of facts. She merely said she was willing to take for granted that Mr. Compton shone in that position.

It happened, that the evening before she left Ashdale, she was in her own room overlooking Mason, who was putting the finishing touches to her packing, when she saw Mrs. Somerton and Mr. Compton walking together in the avenue that shaded one side of the garden.

Mrs. Somerton seemed very earnest; Mr. Compton greatly embarrassed. Sometimes he relieved himself by trying to bite through his cane; sometimes he caught at the few leaves which hung on the boughs overhead. He looked the picture of awkwardness. But suddenly, Mrs. Somerton stopped short, and shook hands with him fervently, and they walked together towards the house.

Margaret set off too early the next morn-

ing to have any opportunity of learning whether Mrs. Somerton had succeeded in bringing Mr. Compton to confession, on that memorable evening; but about two months afterwards, she received a couple of cards bound together with silver twist, and bearing the names of Mr. and Mrs. Compton, which led her to believe that she had chanced to witness the crisis of the affair.

It was a wretched autumn day on which she set out for her new home. All the fine weather seemed to have vanished at once. It was cold and windy, and the rain fell steadily. Margaret was glad of the company of Mason in the carriage. She tried not to think of the past or the future—she tried to forget her first coming to Ashdale, not a year ago; of that solitude she had been led to expect; and of the whole life-time of events she had gone through in those months. Some of these could never occur again, she thought. She could never lose another relative. Mr. Grey was the last she possessed. She could never love again, and therefore could never

be again deceived. Come what may, she thought, the future would be more tranquil than the past. Yet she looked forward with great anxiety to her first interview with Mrs. Fitzpatrick. Her shyness came back with more force than ever; she dreaded the termination of her journey; and her heart stood still with affright when the opening of gates, and the barking of dogs warned her that she had arrived at the cottage.

She saw a tall figure in black standing in the doorway, handsome, pale, like Lady Constance before her distraction. It was her hostess, come to welcome her upon the threshold:—that picturesque but obsolete custom.

"I am afraid, my dear, you had a very rough day for your journey," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick as she led her to the drawing-room.

There was nothing in the words, but the voice seemed to dispel her fears in a moment. She looked up with a smile, though her eyes were filled with tears.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick felt it as difficult to be composed as Margaret, but they both had learned the hard task of self-command.

"It was dreary," said Margaret. "The fire is very pleasant."

She sat down, and looked round the drawing-room. The curtains were drawn before the window where she had seen Aveline on the last evening of her life. There was the sofa on which she was lying; she recalled the gesture of Mr. Haveloc, turning from her to raise one of the pillows.

She shuddered.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick was seated at the table engaged in making the tea. She was exceedingly pale, and her dark eye-brows gave almost an air of severity to her face, except when she smiled.

"Still cold?" said she turning round with one of those beautiful smiles; "you will not be really warm until you have had some tea. Will you come to the table, or shall I bring it to you?"

Margaret laid aside her bonnet, and drew a chair to the table. Mrs. Fitzpatrick

was exceedingly struck by her beauty, and the gracefulness of her action, particularly with that exquisite brightness of complexion, which results not so much from fairness as from a peculiar texture of the skin. It has been likened by a poet to "the dim radiance floating round a pearl."

They parted for the night, greatly pleased with each other. And our first impressions are seldom false to us, if we take care not to reason upon them. Reason and fancy are good separate guides; but I know not how it is, they never work well together. But Margaret did not attempt to philosophise upon the matter. She laid her head upon her pillow with a vague but delightful consciousness, that she had found at last a tranquil home.

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

MARGARET CAPEL.

A NOVEL.

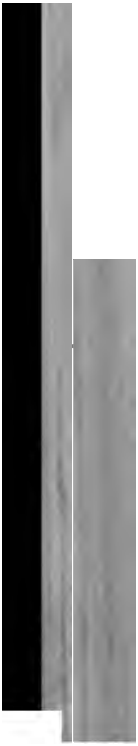
BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1846.



LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street

MARGARET CAPEL.

CHAPTER I.

For not to think of what I need's must feel,
But to be still and patient all I can,
And haply, by abstruse research, to steal
From my own nature all the natural man:
This was my sole resource, my only plan.

COLERIDGE.

And time, that mirrors on its stream aye flowing
Hope's starry beam, despondency's dark shade;
Green early leaves, flowers in warm sunshine blowing,
Boughs by sharp winter's breath all leafless made.

ANON.

MARGARET remained for more than a year in the most perfect retirement. The solitude of Ashdale was nothing to that of Mrs. Fitzpatrick's cottage. This tranquillity

was well adapted to her state of feeling: she never experienced a wish to interrupt it. She was sincerely attached to her hostess. Although reserved, Mrs. Fitzpatrick was even-tempered; and she became very fond of Margaret, whose society filled up such a painful blank in her home. Both had suffered much, though neither ever alluded to her sufferings: and sorrow is always a bond of union. When first she came to Mrs. Fitzpatrick's, her health was so delicate, that the poor lady feared she was to go through a second ordeal, similar to the one she had lately submitted to with her own child. Margaret had a terrible cough and frequent pain in the side, and whenever Mrs. Fitzpatrick saw her pause on her way down stairs with her hand pressed on her heart, or heard the well-known and distressing sound of the cough, the memory of her daughter was almost too painfully renewed. But Mr. Lindsay pronounced the cough to be nervous, and the pain in the side nothing of any consequence;

and though winter was stealing on, his opinion was borne out by Margaret's rapid amendment.

Circumstances had long taught Margaret to suffer in silence: she found then no difficulty in assuming a composure of manner that she did not always feel; and soon the healing effects of repose and time were visible in her demeanour. The loss of her uncle was become a softened grief—for her other sorrow, she never named it even to herself. Yet still if any accident suggested to her heart the name of Mr. Haveloc, it would be followed by a sudden shock, as though a dagger had been plunged into it. She could not bear to think of him, and it was a comfort to be in a place where she was never likely to hear him named.

And in the beautiful country, among those fading woods, on that irregular and romantic shore, was to be found the surest antidote for all that she had endured—for all she might still suffer. In the soft, yet boisterous autumn wind—in the swell of

the mighty waves—in the fresh breath, ever wafted over their foam, there was health for the body, there was peace to the mind. The scenery was so delightful that she was never tired of rambling—and so secluded, that there was no harm in rambling alone. And though a beauty, and by no means a portionless one, she found means to pass her time without an adventure, unless the vague admiration entertained for her by a young coxcomb who was reading for college with the clergyman, might deserve that name.

This youth, not being very skilful in shooting the sea-gulls, had nothing on earth to do except to make love to the first pretty woman he might encounter. He had literally no choice; for Margaret was the only young lady in the parish. She was waylaid, stared at—was molested in church by nosegays laid on the desk of her pew, and annoyed at home by verses that came in with the breakfast things. She was reduced to walk out only with Mrs. Fitz-

patrick ; she was debarred from sitting on the beach—gathering nuts in the woods—even from wandering in the garden, unless she could submit to be stared at from the other side of the hedge. Trained, as she was, in the school of adversity, (a capital school, by the way, to make people indifferent to minor evils), she could not help crying with vexation when the butler coolly brought her up the fiftieth copy of wretched verses, setting forth her charms and her cruelty in no measured terms.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick had smiled to see the contempt with which Margaret brushed down the first bouquet among the hassocks, and left the second unnoticed upon the desk ; even the sweet scent of the Russian violets had not softened her resolution, and the verses wrapped round their stems became the property of the beadle. But Mrs. Fitzpatrick, really sorry for the annoyance of her young charge, spoke confidently to the good Mr. Fletcher ; and she had the pleasure to assure Margaret that

the Hon. Mr. Florestan was going away at Christmas. Still she had felt some surprise and more curiosity at the conduct of so very young a girl, under such circumstances—there had appeared no vanity, no agitation, none of the natural emotion resulting from the novelty of inspiring a passion.

Mr. Florestan was a boy of good family; some people would have called him a man, for he was seventeen and a half; he wrote rhymes and bought hot-house flowers; so many girls would have been delighted at his homage. Margaret seemed merely bored: she cried, as she said, from absolute weariness of him and his scented paper; from the perpetual chafing of a small annoyance. His love was too contemptible to cause a stronger feeling; for herself she had never looked at him, and did not know whether he was tall or short. Once or twice when Mrs. Fitzpatrick had called to her, 'Look, Margaret, there goes your devoted swain!' she had been so long in putting down her work, and coming to the window, that he

had turned the rocks, or the corner of the road, and the opportunity was lost. And he actually left the place, without her ever having seen more of him than a green coat and brass buttons, with which he was wont to enliven their parish church every Sunday, and which being on an exact level with her eye, she could not without affectation avoid. Such entire indifference to a conquest, Mrs. Fitzpatrick could not understand, and she told Margaret with a smile, that some day she would be more indulgent to the feelings of a lover than she seemed at present. The well-known sharp pain went through Margaret's heart as she spoke; but she smiled too, and said she had a great respect for lovers, but she saw no cause to enrol the Hon. Mr. Florestan in their ranks. And so the subject dropped.

After this, many months passed in such stillness, that Margaret hardly knew how they flew. Her only regular correspondent was Lady d'Eyncourt. Her letters formed the one excitement of her life. It was so

delightful to trace her from place to place; to hear the little anecdotes of her travels—even the name of Captain Gage, mentioned casually, brought back vividly to her remembrance, the many happy days she had passed at Chirke Weston. And in the few allusions to her husband that her letters contained, it was evident that the devotion she felt for him before marriage, had increased, and was still gathering strength in a degree that it was perilous to indulge. She said, herself, that the unclouded sunshine of her life could hardly last. To say that she adored Sir Philip, was no figure of speech in her case. The more intimately she became acquainted with his character, the more she found to love and to respect. He had no *little* faults. The reserve which repelled others, vanished entirely with her; and the most exacting of an exacting sex, must have been content with the measure of his fondness. She was not so much his first, as his only object. Captain Gage often said that they were made for each other,

and neither party seemed inclined to dispute the opinion. At last, the storm came. After an unusual silence on the part of Elizabeth, Margaret received a letter—a few lines from Captain Gage, announcing the terrible news of Sir Philip's death. He had been carried off in a few weeks by a fever, at Marseilles. Elizabeth was expecting to become a mother; and the next hurried intelligence from her father announced the disappointment of her hopes,—and spoke of his intention of taking her on to Italy as soon as her health would permit. These few lines had been sent to her at the desire of Elizabeth, and she could not but feel them a proof of her unaltered friendship.

Margaret felt, after this shock, as young people cumbered with much feeling are apt to do, when they see and hear around them so much of sorrow and alarm. Every thing seemed insecure; she could picture no happiness sufficiently stable to be worth desiring; she looked round to see what new

misfortune threatened herself; she was possessed with a feeling of vague apprehension. But her religious impressions, always sincere, and now deepened by the experience of sorrow, enabled her in time to combat this feeling of undue depression.

Always gentle, she became more grave than was common at her years; more than would have been graceful in so young a person, had it not been tempered by the remarkable sweetness of her disposition. She found too the benefit of constant occupation. She learned that nothing so effectually dispels regret.

Her improvement in every branch of knowledge was great enough to content even herself; and in music, her favourite recreation, Mrs. Fitzpatrick often told her that she could at any time have gained her living by her proficiency.

The next event of her tranquil life was the receipt of a box of bride-cake, and a letter from Harriet Conway. This was in

the month of November; just three months after the death of Sir Philip.

The letter, which was written in a good bold hand, ran as follows :—

"Ma mie,

"Do not take it into your head that this is a piece of my bride-cake. Somewhere in the box you will find the cards—Lord and Lady Raymond. I wonder if you recollect who I am. Also, I wonder if you are as pretty as you were two years ago? To be sure you think I might have asked the question a little earlier. But we returned from Germany only a short time before Lucy's marriage.

"I am now at Singleton Manor, and desire you, on the receipt of this, to set off directly, and join me there. I have your promise, and, therefore, you cannot very well be off paying the visit. So come instantly; I cannot endure to wait for anything; and stay as long as ever I please.

So say Uncle and Aunt Singleton, besides the veritable mistress of the mansion,

"HARRIET CONWAY."

Margaret at last found the cards Harriet mentioned under a quantity of bonbons. She rather wondered that her friend was still Harriet Conway; but she was glad that this singular young lady still bore her in mind.

She showed the letter to Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and obtained her ready consent to the visit. There was no objection to Margaret travelling with Mason; a steady creature, who had been so long with her, and who could pay the post-boys as well as a man-servant.

Mason was in ecstacies. Of course she understood paying the post-boys. She would have undertaken to pay the National Debt, if that could have delivered her from the hated seclusion of the cottage. She confessed to Miss Capel, in confidence, that it had really fretted her to see Miss

Capel growing handsomer every day, and not a soul coming, or likely to come, to this wilderness of a place, since poor Mr. Florestan. She confessed she should like to see Miss Capel have her due; and now that she had her health again, she thought it was high time to get out of this dungeon and mix in the world; and for that purpose, she supposed Miss Capel would choose to have a new bonnet, and a new silk walking dress, and a few evening dresses, and more things than she could recollect at once; but she could sit down and make a list of them.

Margaret gratified her by leaving entirely in her hands, the reforming of her wardrobe; and that important matter being arranged, and a warm and reluctant farewell taken of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, she stepped into the post-chaise that was to convey her to Singleton Manor.

She was to make one long day's journey of it—a fatiguing performance—but she was anxious to avoid sleeping on the road.

The last few stages seemed to be interminably long; she was almost exhausted with fatigue. It had been dark for some miles, and she was just beginning to convince herself that there was no chance of reaching their destination that night, when the carriage turned abruptly round; the wheels echoed over the rough stones of a paved court-yard; lights glimmered; the Gothic outline of a grey stone porch became visible; and Margaret alighted at Singleton Manor.

CHAPTER II.

The gnawing envy, the heart-fretting fear,
The vain surmises, the distrustful shews,
The false reports that flying tales do bear,
She doubts, the dangers, the delays, the woes,
She feigned friends, the unassured foes,
With thousands more than any tongue can tell,
Do make a lover's life a wretched hell.

SPENSER.

THE hall into which Margaret was ushered was low-ceilinged, carpeted, and adorned with numerous glass cases filled with stuffed animals, such as a seal, an otter, a Norway bear, and the rarer kinds of birds, that sometimes fall into the way of sportsmen, in distant parts of this island. Some handsome furs were stretched before a blazing wood fire, upon which several dogs lay enjoying the warmth. The

oak staircase was wide and finely carved, and at every few steps there was a broad landing-place, while the balustrades took the opportunity to make a halt also, and to transform themselves into huge claws, which sustained the scutcheon of the Singletons, with the raven's heads, and golden roses duly emblazoned on them.

The room into which Margaret was shown, was divided into two compartments by a screen of oak carved like filagree, with a door-way left in the centre to admit of passing through; the one side of this screen serving for a dressing-room; the other for a bed-room, having a recess filled with a curious tall bed, gloomy with plumes and purple velvet hangings.

While her maid was arranging the preliminaries of her toilet, and Margaret was looking at all the curiosities that the room contained,—the carved wardrobe, the curiously framed pictures, the antique looking glass, upheld by silver cupids, who bestowed on the mirror, the lace draperies

of which they themselves seemed to stand in some little need; her door was thrown open, and Harriet rushed into the room, so altered, so improved, so radiant with health and beauty, that Margaret hardly knew her again.

"Well!" exclaimed Harriet, after kissing and fondling her as she would have done a pet child. "Well, now I have you here, after this long wh ile; I shall not let you go again in a hurry!"

"You are very kind, very kind, indeed," said Margaret, almost overcome by the warmth of her reception, "I cannot tell you how glad I am to see you again, you good little creature. But do you know you are grown considerably taller? You will be too tall to pet soon, if you do not take care. What are you looking at? We have some people staying in the house, that is the reason I have made something of a toilet."

Harriet was rounded into a splendid woman. Her complexion was as soft and clear as alabaster, and a bright carnation colour

in her cheeks, gave a dazzling brilliancy to her hazel eyes. She wore a white Cachemere dress, edged with a red Greek pattern ; her hair was banded back from her forehead, and a slight wreath of white periwinkles, mixed with dark green leaves, encircled her head.

" I was not looking at your dress," said Margaret, smiling, " I did not ascribe your appearance to your toilet, I assure you."

" You little flatterer ! But do you know you will cut us all out ? I never saw any one so improved, and you were quite pretty enough to do mischief before."

"Oh, Harriet !" said Margaret, hardly knowing to what her volatile companion referred.

" True for you," said Harriet, archly. " Well, you have not asked me all the particulars of Lucy's marriage."

" I ought to congratulate you upon it," said Margaret, " I hope Lady Raymond is well ? "

" Lady Raymond—yes, I will let you call Lucy so, because you were not very inti-

mate with her, though I mean you to know each other more by and by; but if you call me Lady Anything, when I marry a Lord, I will not forgive you. Yes, Lucy is very well, and as happy as possible. Lord Raymond is amazingly fond of her; the more so, perhaps, because he is not very likely to attract any body else. There was such a party at the breakfast! We, the bridesmaids, had pelisses of peach-coloured silk, trimmed with swansdown, and Lucy was all in white lace, and she looked so cold, poor girl, while we were as cosy as possible in our warm coats. And Lord Raymond stammered dreadfully; which was very odd, for I had been hearing him the responses for a week previous."

"Harriet, you make me laugh!"

"I mean it. Now let us come down together. You will love my Aunt Singleton; she is such a good little mouse!"

Mrs. Singleton did win very much upon Margaret by the manner in which she received her: there was something in her

quiet and impressive kindness which seemed to say that she felt a more than ordinary interest for the orphan who was thrown in her way.

Margaret looked at her serious but sweet countenance, and felt with the intuitive knowledge that experience gives, that Mrs. Singleton must have suffered much at some period of her life, and that her placidity was as much the effect of resignation as of contentment.

Mr. Singleton looked the hearty fox-hunter. He welcomed Margaret with honest kindness, thanked her repeatedly for taking so long a journey to gratify a wish of Harriet's, and hoped earnestly that dinner would soon be announced, since he was certain she must have been starved on the road. He then crossed over to welcome a strange looking young man who had entered the room, and was standing on the other side of the ample fire-place.

This young man might have been of age, though a short, stumpy face, surmounting

a very large person, gave him the appearance of a little boy under a strong magnifier. His arms were too short, and his hands, which were singularly small, seemed to hang the wrong way. He gave a little kick behind, when he attempted to bow, and began almost every sentence with a short barking laugh.

"Look at that animal!" said Harriet leaning across to Margaret. "That is Mr. Humphries—the very rich Mr. Humphries! Is he not exactly like a seal set upright? Look at him trying to reach my aunt with his short fins! Quite in vain, my good friend! Oh, no, Mr. Humphries, I never shake hands, you know."

The youth, who had advanced for the purpose of exchanging this courtesy with Harriet, barked, gave his accustomed scrape, and retired. Harriet continued her caustic remarks to Margaret.

"Observe the very fat Mrs. Pottinger in the brocaded gown and Mrs. Markham with a whole dish of grapes and currants upon her

head; and their well-bred daughters whispering together on that ottoman—comparing notes about you, I have no doubt! I tell my uncle he need never expect me to pay any attention to this sort of guests. I hardly know who shall take me in to dinner. Colonel Markham drawls so, and Mr. Pottinger speaks through his nose. Then Mr. Baxter is so fat, and the seal—oh! I see Evan has caught somebody that will do to walk across the room with. Uncle Singleton, let that black-looking man take me in to dinner. Evan, I wish to introduce you to Miss Capel."

"Delighted," said Mr. Evan Conway bowing to Margaret.

"You will also take Miss Capel in to dinner."

"Delighted."

"And, oh! in case I don't come near you again, be careful that you make Mr. Humphries sing in the evening."

"Delighted."

"Evan is not a fool," said Harriet,

turning to Margaret, "though you would think so by his using only one word to express everything. What is that man's name Evan, who is propping that side of the chimney-piece with his shoulder?"

"Gordon."

"Oh, good Heaven! A Scotchman! I retract, Margaret, I will have Colonel Markham; though he drawls, he says very little; and anything is better than the brogue. What is he, this Scotchman?"

"Nothing."

"Worse and worse. I detest a man without an occupation; and now I look at him, I suspect he writes."

"Sometimes."

"What does he write in the name of goodness?"

"Travels."

"Oh! that is better than poetry, don't you think so Margaret? I am not sure if I will not put up with him. Is he poor?"

"No."

"Rich then?"

"Nor rich."

"One of your black swans that I always find to be so much worse than geese?"

"Perhaps."

"Introduce him to me."

"Harriet—Mr. Gordon."

"What a detestable introduction. I suppose Mr. Gordon, you are sufficiently acquainted with Evan not to be surprised at anything he says or does?"

Margaret did not hear Mr. Gordon's reply, for he led Harriet off to dinner, which was announced at the moment, and she accepted the offered arm of Mr. Evan Conway.

Margaret was struck with the appearance of the dining-room. It was a large dark room; for although crowded with lamps, black oak is the most difficult of all things to light up. The mantle-piece was in the form of a gothic arch; the ceiling crossed with carved beams of wood; and at the end of the apartment there was an arched recess,

where stood the sideboard loaded with old plate.

"Are you fond of talking?" said Mr. Evan, as soon as they were placed at table.

Margaret thought the question an odd one; but she said that she had never considered the subjeet, and that she should hardly think herself a good judge of her own peculiarities.

"Singular now, what different replies people give to the same question," said her companion. "Most young ladies say, oh, no, Mr. Evan! Or, how can you ask such things, Mr. Conway? Or, dear me, what makes you think so? You may imagine how much refreshed I feel, when a young lady makes an answer which shows something like thought and originality. Pray who taught you to think?"

"I believe, I taught myself," said Margaret, amused by the singularity of her neighbour.

"Very industrious of you!" said he smiling. "It is a great exertion to teach

one's self anything. One has to undergo the double labour of master and scholar—both hard situations. Do you like the society in this neighbourhood?"

"I know nothing of it. I arrived to-day, just before dinner."

"But the general aspect of it—do pronounce an opinion. What a combination of grace and intelligence in the ladies; and—and—what is the corresponding virtue in the gentlemen?"

"I cannot tell," said Margaret.

"Oh! let us come to a decision—or, suppose we illustrate. The man opposite, whom that amiable girl is trying to encourage, mistaking awkwardness for shyness—is he your beau-ideal?"

"I will not tell you," said Margaret.

"Poor Humphries!" said Mr. Evan, still looking at the couple on the other side. "He will go home now, and swear she is his devoted admirer! How well Miss Bremer hits off a scene of that kind in the new novel of the H—— Family."

"I recollect it," said Margaret, smiling.

"His letter to his brother—ha! ha!—You ladies see the bye-play of society so very keenly."

"I am not an authoress," said Margaret.

"I am aware of that. You do not look in the least like one, I can assure you."

"What do they look like, then?"

"Green spectacles, frizzled hair, which they obstinately refuse to cover with a cap. Large hands in black mittens—ditto feet, in villainous thick shoes. In fact, every thing that is most odious in women, and to crown all, when they walk abroad, or take the air, or whatever phrase they may employ to indicate their savage peregrinations, they exhibit to the world an old straw bonnet adorned with a broken black feather—this costume is invariable."

"I do not believe that picture to be always correct," said Margaret laughing.

"But it has entirely answered my pur-

pose, it has made you laugh ; and a genuine merry laugh is not a thing to be met with every day in the week."

" But a description is of no value if it is devoid of truth," said Margaret.

" Truth, my dear Miss Capel, is a very excellent lady or gentleman, (I am not quite certain of the gender) and I do not dispute its value ; for you may have often remarked that the things are valuable in proportion to their scarcity. The most ill-favoured curiosities fetch a high price in the market. Nobody denies that truth is scarce enough to be a curiosity, and in most cases a very ill-favoured one. You don't agree with me, and I'm very sorry for it—but I cannot alter my opinion."

" I was not going to oppose it," said Margaret. " I have no mania for making converts."

" No. You were merely saying to yourself that you had come in the way of a monstrous odd person. That you did not agree with a word he said ; but that it was

not worth while to oppose the fancies of a passing acquaintance."

Margaret laughed.

"Now, by way of returning good for evil, I will give you some excellent advice. Never touch either curry or ice at this house. They do not manage well the two extremes of hot and cold. The curry is stuffed with rhubarb, and the ice with ground-glass. I found a splinter in my mouth the other day. On the contrary, their farm yard is famous—no end of chickens and turkies, and fresh eggs and cream; it is quite a country-house you see. Well, it is very hard you will not believe any thing I say."

"I was not going to contradict you," said Margaret.

"But you have no idea how transparent your countenance is. It will take four or five years more before you will be able to conceal your sentiments. You did not think, when first I was introduced to you, that I was such a *causeur*. But, reflect,

my dear Miss Capel, upon the extreme difficulty of keeping up any kind of conversation with my sister Harriet. A single word introduced edgeways, is the amount of any one's share in a dialogue with her. She is fond of talking, and so am I; and, of course, as a lady, I always yield her the precedence. Do not run away with the idea that I am a satirical person. I am by no means rapid in detecting the weak points in my neighbour's characters. Do you mean to hunt next Tuesday?"

"Oh, no!"

"Why not? Harriet would give you an infallible mount; I believe that is their phrase. For my own part, I never was on a horse in my life."

"Oh! am I to believe that?"

"Why not? It is out of my line. Depend upon it, there is something in the atmosphere of a stable that impairs a man's brains, supposing he sets out in life with any; and the few I may possess are the only means of earning salt to my porridge. I

have, therefore, always rather shunned four-footed animals. But that reason does not apply to you."

"Not exactly that reason; but it is equally out of my line. I mean hunting, for I am very fond of riding. It is very becoming to Harriet; but in me, it would be only an imitation, and a very awkward one."

"You do seem to be one of those whom the winds of Heaven should not visit too roughly," said Mr. Evan. "What, rising already? Harriet is in a great hurry to dissolve the house to-night. Will you sit next me to-morrow?"

Margaret was the last person to give a favourable answer to so bold a request. She gathered together her gloves and her handkerchief in silence, and followed the ladies into the drawing-room.

"Well, what do you think of Evan?" asked Harriet eagerly, as soon as she could reach Margaret.

"I think him very clever, but I could

not get rid of the impression that he was laughing at me."

Harriet fell on an ottoman in a burst of merriment.

"Dear, little innocent; laughing at you, depend on it men never laugh at any thing so pretty. Miss Lydia Pottinger, don't you think my friend here the prettiest woman in Somersetshire."

The young lady thus appealed to, would much rather have been burned than have allowed such a truth. She was not generous enough even to think Margaret pretty, much less to say so; therefore, after a little cough, which Harriet watched with much amusement, she exclaimed with great naiveté:

"Oh! talking of beauty, dear Miss Conway, you can't think the number of pretty women we saw at Boulogne. Hetty and I remarked that really every other woman was good looking."

"Really!" said Harriet directing towards her the proud stare that Margaret had

sometimes noticed at Chirke Weston, when any one in company displeased her. "I say, Margaret, the creature supposes I do not see her poor evasion; I know it would have choked her to admit your beauty, but I wished her choked!" and Harriet stood with her foot on the fender, and her hand on the mantel-piece, looking whole volumes of scorn that Miss Lydia had not been willing to undergo strangulation at her desire.

"Look, ma mie," she continued, "do you like these candlesticks of gold filagree? These people are going to stay all to-morrow and part of the next day. Fancy! that is the way we visit in this part of the country. Did you see how I manœuvred Miss Markham into the chair next Mr. Humphries? Pretended that I should be wanted to carve the fowls, a thing I never did, and never shall do, and gave her my place; so, never say that I neglect the interests of my aunt's guests."

"Did you like Mr. Gordon?"

"After all the trouble I took to get him; no. He was very conceited; so I merely told him to hold his tongue, and amused myself by watching you and Evan."

"Do you not think," said Margaret timidly, "had you not better talk a little to some of the young ladies?"

"I—why no—I think not," said Harriet, throwing her haughty glance around, "I am not a very popular character among them. Do you try the Markhams, and if you find them bearable, I'll see about it."

So Margaret did as she was desired, and the usual nothings were exchanged between her and the young ladies.

Harriet remained standing in the same attitude looking at their proceedings in the glass, and of course got the credit of spending the time in contemplating her own face. Nothing could be more independant than her proceeding. She prepared herself a cup of coffee, placed it on the chimney-piece, and drank it at intervals; still keeping her eyes fixed on the glass. Then she came

sauntering up to Miss Markham who was talking to Margaret.

" Well, Miss Markham," she said, " how did you like Mr. Humphries ?"

" Oh ! very much," said Miss Markham, drawing her gold chain through her fingers, " he improves upon acquaintance."

" He had need," returned Harriet shortly, and she turned away and loitered about the room until the gentlemen appeared.

" Here comes the English Moriani !" she exclaimed, as Mr. Humphries made his appearance in the doorway. " Come. Mr. Humphries, lose no time, begin singing directly."

He scraped with one foot, gave a very wide smile, and said he should be happy, if she had anything he knew, and if she would take the trouble to accompany him.

Harriet pointed to a heap of music; told him to select three or four songs, and sent Miss Markham to play for him : while she threw herself on a sofa near, and summoned Margaret to sit by her.

" Come here, ma mie," she said, " you

have been very good and civil, and Aunt Singleton has been smiling her approbation of you for the last half hour. Now rest yourself. Is it not strange what a fine voice that seal has? Look at him turning the leaves with his short fins. He will be the death of me! But you should see him hunt; he has a capital stud, and rides well though you would not believe it. Will you have him?"

"No thank you," said Margaret laughing.

"Then I will not interfere with Miss Markham. What is that commotion, I wonder, among the dogs in the hall? It cannot be an arrival at this time of night. I must go and sing that duet from the Andronico with Mr. Humphries. You will admire it extremely."

Mr. Humphries and Harriet sang admirably, Margaret was delighted, and drew near the piano to listen. Most of the gentlemen came round to applaud and admire, while the young ladies contented themselves

with remarking that they had been taught in a different style, and had been always recommended to avoid such theatrical music as the unhappy duet now under discussion.

Meantime, while the fine voices of the singers were gliding through the charming little movement, *O voce soave*, all unconscious of the imputations thrown upon their efforts, Margaret was very much surprised to see the door thrown open, and Mr. Gage walk leisurely up to Mrs. Singleton. She concluded that he was staying in the house, and that having dined out, he was only just returned. Nothing could be farther from the fact.

Having paid his compliments to the lady of the house, he advanced to Mr. Singleton, who greeted him with a start and a shout, and many other boisterous indications of surprise and pleasure; and seizing him by the arm, hurried him among the group round the piano; where regardless of Harriet's occupation, he tapped her on the

shoulder, and bade her welcome an old friend of hers. Now Mr. Singleton had always taken Mr. Gage's part, although he stood too much in awe of Harriet to contend the point with her; but she well knew his opinion, and had no idea of making her welcome a very warm one.

Without the slightest sign of embarrassment or surprise, without even interrupting her part in the duet, which was now drawn to a close, she allowed him to touch her hand, stooped her head a little, and then directed her glance steadily over Miss Markham's shoulder to the pages of the music book from which she was reading. Mr. Gage was not given to betray his feelings any more than herself—perhaps he had anticipated no kinder reception—he drew himself up, stared haughtily at the company, arranged his moustaches, looked at his watch, told Mr. Singleton he had not expected to arrive so soon; and then perceiving Margaret, advanced to her, believed—was *sure* he had the pleasure of

addressing Miss Capel; pressed her hand with remarkable earnestness, told her how rejoiced he was to meet her again so unexpectedly; hoped that her stay at Singleton Manor was likely to be a long one; and, in fact, tried very hard to make an impression. It was plain he had either forgotten, or forgiven her rejection of Hubert, and so far Margaret was pleased; for the rest, she knew what his extreme civility meant. This lasted until the company had done thanking and complimenting the singers; and then Margaret expected that Harriet would have addressed a few words to Mr. Gage, who was standing close beside her; but she perversely turned round and addressed Mr. Humphries.

"Well," she said, "you and I, Mr. Humphries, have done something wonderful, according to all these good people. I think we *did* get on very well."

"Oh! I am glad of that, Miss Conway. Was I quite right in that last part?"

"Quite; it never went better."

"Oh! I was afraid of that E. It is such an awkward interval."

"Very. A seventh always is; and it is more difficult to hit in concerted music than in a solo."

"Yes. Shall you hunt to-morrow?"

"I have not made up my mind; and you know even if I had, I might change it: women are not always to be depended upon."

"Oh! I don't know. I like—I have not a bad opinion of women, do you know, Miss Conway."

"I am sure all the women are much obliged to you for your good opinion, Mr. Humphries," said Harriet, fixing her brilliant eyes upon him, without the slightest appearance of irony in their expression; "it is a proof of your good sense not to follow in the common track of unmeaning abuse against our sex."

"Yes; that is what I think—there is no sense in it: and people who have mothers —and that—"

Mr. Humphries evidently thought his

sentence complete; and Harriet, leaning over Margaret, whispered, "Mothers, *and that*:—to think that old Chaucer's delicate idea should have found its way into such a head, no wonder it comes out again rather garbled!"

Still Mr. Gage stood fronting Harriet, with his eyes fixed full upon her; and still she perversely avoided meeting his glance.

"We owe you a thousand thanks, Miss Markham," she said, turning graciously to that young lady, "for your accompaniment:—the second movement is no sinecure to play."

"I was very happy, I am sure, to be of any use," said Miss Markham, amiably.

"Perhaps you will be able to induce Mr. Humphries to give us 'Di pescator ignobile.' I forget who was your singing master, Mr. Humphries?"

"Oh! I learned when I was at Oxford of one of the choristers. I had three lessons a week all the time I was there; and glee meetings besides of an evening."

"All you ever did learn there, I'll engage!" whispered Harriet, as Mr. Humphries went to the piano.

Margaret looked anxiously at Harriet, and at Mr. Gage; she seemed so determined not to notice him, and he looked equally resolved to make her speak.

"So it was you making all that noise," said Harriet, turning carelessly round; "I thought the dogs had gone mad!"

"Donald recognised me, I believe," said Mr. Gage; "the noise was of his making, not mine."

"Oh, do you hear him!" cried Harriet; "is not that good. I must tell Uncle Singleton that when I can catch him. Did any body give you any dinner, Mr. Gage, when you arrived?"

"Thank you—no. I underwent that ceremony on the road."

"I envy you. I like dining at an inn; don't you, Margaret?"

"I have not yet had an opportunity of congratulating you on the marriage of your

sister with *Lord Raymond*," said Mr. Gage, with emphasis.

"Thank you very much," returned Harriet; "only the affair is almost a fortnight old, and one has nearly forgotten all about it. How long do you think, Mr. Gordon, one may offer congratulations after a wedding?"

"I really have hardly considered the subject," said Mr. Gordon: "I should say, perhaps, during the honeymoon a very good distinction; so you see, Mr. Gage, you have still a fortnight left."

"I was surprised, I own," said Mr. Gage; "I had not imagined Lord Raymond's selection would have fallen where it did."

"Lord Raymond was a wise man, Mr. Gage," said Harriet, laughing; "and knew when he was well off."

Mr. Gage looked earnestly at her for a few moments, and then moved away.

"Hark you, ma mie," said Harriet, leaning towards Margaret, "you would hardly believe how I long for a good laugh at this

moment. I know George so well!—Now, he has actually taken the trouble to get leave of absence as soon as ever he heard of this marriage, and to come over here to see how I bear the shock of Lord Raymond's marriage. He believes me a disappointed wretch; and that the very good spirits I am in to-night are merely forced, to conceal the anguish of a breaking heart;" and Harriet, unable any longer to restrain her laughter, fell back in her chair, and gave way to one burst of merriment after another.

"Did you see, Margaret, how he fixed his eyes upon me to detect, if he could, the constraint I was putting on my feelings; how he watched for some trace of suffering in my voice; something to betray the anguish within; and the stress he laid on *Lord Raymond*, as if he would have asked how I liked parting with my especial property. I would not have missed this scene for any thing in life!"

"Oh, Harriet! do not laugh so. He is looking at you!"

"No great wonder in that, my dear, since he has come all the way from Ireland for that especial purpose. Mr. Gage! I wish to show you the bracelet Lord Raymond gave me on the morning of his marriage. Look! this is Lucy's hair. I told him not to put any of his straw-coloured stuff along with it, to spoil the effect. I rather like those dolphins fretted with rubies, they have an eastern look. He would clasp it on, over my swansdown cuff, and I did not like to take it off, though I had the pleasure of telling him he had done me an incredible deal of mischief."

Mr. Gage stood looking attentively at the bracelet, which she had unclasped, and given into his hand.

"Do you not think it very handsome?" she said.

"Very. It would almost have reconciled you to the match had you been averse to it," said Mr. Gage.

"It did not reconcile me to his crushing

my beautiful swansdown," said Harriet. "Here, give it me; you cannot put it on. Margaret shall clasp it."

"It must have been a trying day to you on the whole," said Mr. Gage, employing himself as he spoke in fastening the bracelet on Harriet's arm, regardless of her hint.

"Why, between you and I, it was," said Harriet, holding up her embroidered handkerchief by two corners, and contemplating the pattern of the point lace, as she leaned back in the chair. "First, I had to get up early—a thing I detest in cold weather; then—let me see, what was my next trouble? Oh! my shoes were too long; and I was obliged to steal a pair of Lucy's:—and then, Margaret, when Lucy was nearly dressed, and I expected her to sit down by the fire, and have some breakfast in peace and quietness, she suddenly leaned up against mamma's bureau, and burst out crying. I never was so taken aback in my life; for she is not given to strong demonstrations; and what to say to her,

I knew not. I could not tell her she was not going to be married; and that seemed to be the cause of her grief. However, we managed with salts and essences, and scolding and coaxing, to bring her round; and then we got on very well till after breakfast, when we came to the parting. Now, you know, Margaret, in the same county, it can hardly be called a parting. But then Lucy began again; and Lord Raymond did so fuss, and so stammer, by way of consoling her. And when they were off, and the company melted away—what do you think I did? I got into plain clothes again as fast as possible; and sat down to stuff your box of cake full of bon-bons, I took you for the little girl you were when I left you. Mr. Gage, a compliment, Sir, quick now!"

"I would not offend Miss Capel by supposing that I could compliment her," said Mr. Gage.

"Aha! Margaret, the fun we will have at Wardenscourt! The riding and driving;

the parties and dances; the plays—the tableaux!"

And Harriet went on eagerly planning a visit with Margaret to her sister, as soon as Lord and Lady Raymond were settled at Wardenscourt. Mr. Gage seemed for a wonder to be completely puzzled. He remained gazing at Harriet in the greatest uncertainty, endeavouring to reconcile to himself the sparkling and mischievous enjoyment that her looks expressed, with the misery she must be feeling upon the destruction of all her ambitious hopes. Harriet, regardless of those remorseless eyes, went on conversing gaily with Mr. Humphries and two or three other gentlemen; while Mr. Gage sometimes concluded that she was the best actress in the world; sometimes, that as her heart was not engaged in the matter, she was able to bear without much pain the loss of a good match; sometimes, that whatever her feelings might have been, she intended to

console herself with the hand of Mr. Humphries.

This idea filled him with indignation; for Mr. Humphries, without the merit of a title, was more unprepossessing in appearance than Lord Raymond himself; and Mr. Gage, like many men in the army, thought, that next to good birth and the glory of serving Her Majesty, stood the inestimable and incalculable advantage of possessing a fine person.

"Harriet is looking well, don't you think?" said Mr. Singleton, coming up to Mr. Gage.

The fact was too incontestible to admit of a dispute, for Harriet was looking handsomer than ever she had done in her life; and Mr. Gage said so, Harriet was at a little distance, about to leave the room for the night. Margaret rose to follow her.

"Ah!" said Mr. Singleton, on hearing Mr. Gage's flattering opinion of his niece, "Well, never mind; it will all come right one day yet."

Margaret overheard the exclamation, given in the hearty tone of the old sportsman; and Harriet's former remark seemed to ring in her ears:

"These things never do come right again, Margaret."

CHAPTER III.

Wordes sharply wound, but greatest grief of scorning growes.

SPENSER.

Tal d'un alma l'effanno sepolto
Si travede in un riso fallace,
Chè la pace mal finge nel volto
Chi si sente la guerra nel cor.

METASTASIO.

Mr. Singleton breakfasted at nine o'clock; and it was the custom of the house for everybody to appear at that meal. At half past eight, the worthy squire read prayers in the chapel; and at this ceremony all the servants, and such visitors as pleased, attended.

This had been a custom in the house from the days of Edward the Sixth; and Mr. Singleton would on no account have

omitted it; though his performance of this duty was something odd. Any one might have thought from his tones, that he was calling over the names of his hounds. Margaret made a point of attending; and found Mrs. Singleton, Harriet, and Mr. Humphries assembled.

As soon as prayers were over, Harriet hurried off to make breakfast; and commanded Margaret to sit beside her; and by degrees the rest of the visitors assembled round the table. Some little time after they were all collected, George Gage came into the room; made some very earnest inquiries after Mrs. Singleton's health; which that lady imperfectly heard, and replied to very mildly; and then begged to know whether Miss Capel had recovered the fatigue of her journey. Having received a satisfactory answer to this question, he remained standing on the hearth-rug, looking at all the people, as if they were eating and drinking for his sole amusement.

"Do you ever eat breakfast, Mr. Gage?" asked Harriet, after he had remained some time in the same position.

"Thank you—yes. I breakfasted an hour ago."

"How was that?" asked Mr. Singleton. "What made you so early afield?"

"I was anxious about one of my horses," said Mr. Gage. "I was afraid he had sprained his shoulder; and as I wished to see him early this morning—I breakfasted at the same time."

"Oh, but that is important!" said Mr. Humphries, rising hastily, and pulling the table-cloth crooked as he rose, "shall I go and have a look at him?"

"Sit still, Mr. Humphries;" said Harriet. "Horses, we know, are much more amiable and important than their masters. Still, as the masters must be fed some time or other, they had better take their meals at the proper hour. The horse will wait till you have finished your breakfast."

Mr. Singleton and Mr. Humphries laughed heartily at this address; and Mr. Gage informed Mr. Humphries, that he need not trouble him to look at the horse, for that he seemed to be perfectly well this morning.

Mr. Humphries nodded to express his acquiescence in this remark, and continued eating; and Mr. Singleton noticing, for the first time, that Harriet was not dressed in her habit, asked in astonishment why she was not going out hunting with them as usual.

"Yes, you will have a great loss in me," said Harriet laughing. "I intend to disappoint the field. I am not going to run off this first day that I have Miss Capel with me; and I have something to do—I intend to call on the Veseys in the course of the morning."

"Wait till to-morrow, and I'll drive you over;" said Mr. Singleton. "I should like to call on the Veseys myself."

"Indeed you won't, Uncle Singleton," said Harriet. "You always knock my bonnet with your elbow as you get in and out of the carriage. I vowed the last time I let you drive me, you should not sacrifice my next best bonnet in that worthless way."

"Ha! ha!" said Mr. Singleton, "what does it signify? You have the best seat and the best horse in the country, and what matters spoiling your bonnet."

"Go! you have no feelings," said Harriet. "I mean to ride to the Veseys today, and Margaret and Evan shall accompany me; and so we shall trouble nobody, good uncle. Another cup of tea, Mr. Humphries? Why you make absolutely no breakfast! Is this a preparation for a day's hard hunting? Try that curried lobster."

"Ha! ha! thank you Miss Conway, I think I have done very well," said Mr. Humphries; looking on the wrecks scattered on and around his plate.

Everybody was inclined to be of his opinion; and Margaret wondered how Harriet could say such things with a grave face.

"I wish," pursued Mr. Humphries, "this was not a hunting morning, because it would be so pleasant to ride with you to the Veseys."

"But which is the attraction, Mr. Humphries? Is it Mrs. Vesey, or I, or my friend, Miss Capel? Do now be confidential and tell me; I will keep your secret, upon my word!"

Mr. Humphries laughed bashfully; he could not very well scrape his foot when seated; but he made a gesture something as if he wished to lift up the table-cloth, and disappear beneath it. George Gage, looking every moment more haughty, stared down upon Harriet and Mr. Humphries in speechless contempt.

At last he coldly recommended Mr. Humphries not to lose a day at that time of year; for that his groom predicted a frost

soon, and he had never known the fellow mistaken in the weather.

"Is that the man you had from Mr. Singleton's," asked Harriet.

"Yes—Thompson," replied Mr. Gage.

"Ah!" returned Harriet, "he was well brought up; it would be his own fault if he did not learn to understand horses here."

"Did Captain Gage keep the lad I recommended him?" asked Mr. Singleton.

"Not long," replied Mr. Gage. "I never saw any thing so wretched as my father's management of his stables. He never bought a horse that he was not palpably cheated; and, if he chanced to buy a good one, the animal would be ruined, with that lame old sailor at the head of affairs."

"Don't say one word against Captain Gage," exclaimed Harriet. "Whatever he does is sure to be better than any body else. I do not mean wiser, Mr. Gage, but better. Perhaps no one else would choose to have a lame sailor with one eye to superintend his

stables. It shows he has more kindness than his neighbours."

"He might have pensioned the old fellow, if he was so fond of him, instead of keeping him to do mischief," said Mr. Gage; pleased, however, with the tribute to his father's goodness of heart. "He once ruined a splendid pointer of mine with his nonsense; and even Hubert, a fellow who has spent his life in a frigate, could not help seeing how things were going on."

Here Mr. Humphries, whose extraordinary face had brightened up as much as it could, during this discussion, attempted to express incoherently, his admiration of Captain Gage's conduct.

"Depend on it, Mr. Humphries," said Harriet, "that sailors are the best people extant. They are all that is left of the romance of warfare. Like the knights of the Middle Ages, there is a simple reality about them that does not belong to the present time."

"Harriet means to say, they are the only people who are not humbugs," said Evan Conway, translating his sister's remark.

"It is very true, Miss Conway," said Mr. Humphries; who, it need not be said, did not understand one word that she had uttered; "I always liked sailors very much. Don't you think Miss Capel would be generally considered pretty?"

"Undoubtedly, Mr. Humphries. I was sure your good taste would discover that."

"They are bringing round the horses, Miss Conway. I wish we were to have the pleasure of your company."

"It is a great temptation, Mr. Humphries; but another time. How well you look in your red coat—it is the most becoming dress—"

"No—do you think so!" said Mr. Humphries, with a visible desire to vanish under the table. "No—I never noticed. I say, Miss Conway, I hope we shall have another duet this evening."

"So do I. You cannot suppose I often meet with such a second; and I am very fond of music."

"Come, Humphries," said Mr. Gage, stalking past them as he spoke; "there is your horse playing the deuce out yonder, standing so long."

This was a summons he could not neglect; and after scrambling for his pocket handkerchief, which had dropped under his chair, Mr. Humphries quitted the room.

"Oh, Harriet!" exclaimed Margaret, with a serious look, when the other ladies had disappeared in company with Mrs. Singleton.

"Oh, little Puritan! what is the matter now?" returned Harriet, catching her round the waist, and whirling her in a rapid waltz round and round the large room.

"How you do flirt," said Margaret, pausing, with her hand to her side.

"You should be the last person to ac-

cuse me," said Harriet, laughing, "I asked you, if you would have the man. You declined the honour, and therefore it is no business of yours."

"It is a business of some other person, then," said Margaret, archly.

"What other person?"

"Mr. Gage."

"You don't say so!" returned Harriet, crossing the room, and leaning through the deep oaken doorway, "Evan!"

"At your service," returned her brother, coming in with the morning paper in his hand.

"We mean to ride at two; and you may accompany us."

"Thank you very much."

"Will this be your first essay in horsemanship?" asked Margaret, smiling.

"Ha! Miss Capel, you remember what I said to you. A great point that—I feel highly flattered by it."

Margaret smiled quietly and moved away. She had too much self-possession to

be either flattered or pleased by his ironical civility.

When they went upstairs to prepare for their ride, Harriet, whose ways were singularly independent, came into Margaret's room, half attired, and stood before the large glass, arranging her habit.

"Look here, Margaret," said she, "you should wear a waistcoat.—Masculine?—not at all. Copy me, my dear; I dress very well on horseback."

"So you do at all times, I think," said Margaret.

"Much obliged. I say, what do you think of Evan?"

"I should be so very likely to tell you truly," said Margaret.

"Then I will tell you what to think of him," said Harriet. "He has an excellent head, my dear, but no heart; he thinks he will be a very great man. I differ from him; no very great man ever was heartless. He will be only a little above the middle size. I like him very much."

"How odd you are, Harriet."

"Do you think so, ma mie? What a pretty Victorine you have—sable I see."

"Now, Mr. Humphries—ha! ha! one cannot help laughing when one thinks of him—has a capital heart, but no head. Which do you like best, Margaret?"

"The heart," replied Margaret.

"But then, my dear, like most Englishmen, his nerves are actually made of pack thread; he has not a grain of sensibility. He is ugly. I tell Evan sometimes that he is ugly to a misfortune; but this man is ugly to a fault. But he is an excellent son to a very tiresome old mother; honest, good-natured, rich, obstinate. I do not know if he has any other qualities, or I would tell you. I think it my duty to walk you over the course, you perceive."

"You make an excellent chaperon, Harriet."

"But Margaret," said Harriet with a hurried change of manner, "I never knew anything so good as George coming here

just now. It gives me pleasure to see that I can torment his pride, not his feelings; but his absurd haughty conceit, that I was to remain his slave under all treatment. I do not care for him the least atom, and I despise his coming to pry into my concerns, to investigate and to triumph in my distress, as he thinks, on Lucy's marriage. I can turn the tables on him, and I will!"

"Indeed, Harriet," said Margaret, "it is hardly generous in you to take that view of Mr. Gage's conduct. I think he would not have taken so much trouble, if he had not been very much interested about you. I think ever since I have known you both, he has appeared to feel anything but indifference to you; and if you cannot return his feelings, is it fair to treat them with contempt?"

Margaret spoke earnestly, yet half afraid of giving offence; but to her surprise, as soon as she had finished, her eccentric friend caught her in her arms, and kissed her heartily; then gathering up the long

folds of her habit she hastened down stairs.

Mr. Evan Conway was leaning against the neck of his sister's horse, without his hat, or any sign of being prepared to accompany the ladies ; a groom was mounted, and in waiting. He helped them both to mount, arranged their dresses with great care and then left them.

" So we are not to have the honour of your company," Harriet called after him.

He replied by a shake of the head, and went into the house.

They paid their visit. Mrs. Vesey was a young married woman, with four or five small children, who very much occupied her time and thoughts. The conversation was chiefly made up of things which Johnny and Matilda had said ; of the quarrel which Harry had with the nurse, and the beautiful cake which uncle Richard had sent to Mary on her birthday. Then the children were produced, in velvet frocks, and long trained ringlets of white hair, and

these having been kissed and praised enough, the two friends took their leave.

"Ah, that is over!" said Harriet, when they rode off, "I like children well enough, Margaret, to make hay with, or play at blindman's buff; but I always long to pinch those little dressed up dolls. If Lucy should have any olive branches, I shall make them as rude and as natural as possible."

"How soft the wind is," said Margaret, "it is often colder than this in summer."

It was certainly a mild day for November. Although the twilight was coming on, there was nothing chilly in the air. The wind drove slowly before it large floating masses of grey clouds; the leafless trees rocked majestically to and fro in the dim light; and the scent of the air, and of the fallen leaves was soft and refreshing.

Before they had gone very far they were overtaken by Mr. Gage and Mr. Humphries, who were returning from hunting.

"Well—oh! now—come!" exclaimed

Mr. Humphries, who was sometimes troubled with incoherence, "how glad I am that we came home this way."

"It is, indeed, a very fortunate circumstance," said Mr. Gage, addressing himself pointedly to Margaret, "I hope you will really value our escort now that it is growing so dark."

"Yes, it is a lonely road about here," said Mr. Humphries, closing up to Harriet.

"I never am afraid of anything," said Harriet, "but I am glad of your company, because I wish to know what sort of a run you had."

Mr. Humphries was very much enlivened by this demand upon his descriptive powers. By the aid of a very few words, and a great many extraordinary gestures, he conveyed to Harriet the information she desired.

Mr. Gage, looking the very impersonation of injured pride, suffered them to take the lead, and then riding up close to Margaret, and laying his hand affectionately on

the mane of her horse, he exerted all his powers to make himself agreeable.

He was intent on persuading Margaret to ride some day to the place where the hunters met. It was a very gay scene on a fine morning, and would make a pleasant change for her. Although nobody could disapprove more strongly than he did, a lady following the hounds, yet just to ride to cover, and go quietly home again, he thought quite feminine, and perfectly allowable.

Margaret, who readily perceived that Mr. Gage was extremely angry with Harriet, and that this was the cause of his invectives against ladies hunting, could not help smiling, but she willingly consented to his plan, provided he could secure her a horse so conveniently stupid, as not to become excited by the scene. And then, the spirit of romance being not yet extinguished within her, she began turning over in her own mind how she could manage that Mr.

Gage should ride next to Harriet. Chance effected the transfer for her; in turning down a lane, Mr. Humphries reined back his horse, and Mr. Gage pushing forward at the same time, the manœuvre was accomplished. But it seemed to very little purpose. Harriet kept her head perversely turned to the hedge-row, as if bent on counting the feathered clusters of traveller's ivy, which adorned the wayside, or else leaning back in her saddle, she addressed some laughing remark to those behind. While Margaret rose very high in the opinion of Mr. Humphries, from the simple and kind answers she gave to all his questions, and from the grace with which she guided her delicate looking steed. He began to think that she might be deserving of a share in the rich estates which his prudent mamma was always cautioning him against offering to any lady who gave evidence of particularly wishing for them. It was very easy to see that this worthy young man was not gifted with any great

degree of sensibility, but yet Margaret was a little surprised when, after a few remarks interchanged about their favourite colours for dogs, horses, &c.; her companion, looking rather uncomfortable, which was his nearest approach to a sentimental state of mind, suddenly asked her if some fellow who wrote had not said that music was the food of love, and if she thought it was.

Margaret, with her gentle voice, turned to him and said that Shakspeare was very great authority; and that such love as he depicted in his lighter plays she dared say could be fed very well upon music. That she thought, after all, he put it as a question, not as a remark, but that she would ask Harriet, who was a great reader of Shakspeare.

"No, don't," said Mr. Humphries uneasily, "Miss Conway would only laugh."

But Harriet, having caught the word love, insisted on the question being referred to her, and as soon as she could speak for laughing, "Look you, Mr. Humphries,"

she said, "music is the food of love, and love is the food of fools; but if you have any curiosity to hear the line in question it is this,—

'If music be the food of love, play on.'"

Mr. Humphries thanked Harriet, made several gestures expressive of great confusion, and then resumed his dialogue with Margaret.

"Do you think, Miss Capel," he continued, "that anybody can love twice?"

"No, Mr. Humphries," returned Margaret quietly.

"No, Miss Capel?" said Mr. Humphries uneasily.

"I think not," replied Margaret smiling at the question.

"But then, Miss Capel, if one is prevented from marrying one's first love, what can one do?"

"Those who think love necessary must remain, single you know, Mr. Humphries; but most people will marry some one else."

And so completely did she feel that love with her was past for ever, that she discussed the topic with as much calmness as if she had been fifty years old.

"But one would not like to keep single for ever, you know, Miss Capel," said Mr. Humphries.

Margaret highly amused at the idea of being selected as a confidante on such short notice, merely laughed at this declaration; which Mr. Humphries enforced by one of his widest smiles thereby disclosing, the only beauty he possessed; namely, a singularly fine set of teeth.

It was almost dark when they arrived before the Manor House, but Harriet insisted that there was light enough to see some remarkably curious birds, which were kept in a part of the ornamental grounds.

Mr. Gage and Margaret could not but follow, although he represented to her the imprudence of hanging over a pond at sunset after being heated with riding.

The pond turned out to be a very pretty lake with little rocky dwellings for the water-fowl.

Harriet stood almost in the water feeding them with bread, which she had provided herself with at the house; she offered some to Margaret, but Mr. Gage urged so strongly the danger of remaining in the damp, that Margaret, a little frightened, complied.

Harriet laughing at her caution remained with Mr. Humphries making ducks and drakes, to the great surprise of the water-fowl.

Mr. Gage, as usual, to relieve his feelings, paid the most careful attention to Margaret; selected the dryest paths for her; insisted on disencumbering her of her riding whip, which might weigh a quarter of an ounce; admired its agate handle, pitied the troublesome draperies in which she was enveloped, and pointed out, as they went along, the most beautiful parts of the landscape; all the while with his moustache so close to the rim of her hat, that any one

looking from the windows, might have imagined, with some show of reason, that he intended to salute her.

Mr. Singleton seemed surprised to see Margaret enter the drawing-room without her friend; but on hearing where she had left her, he laughed heartily, and said it was all right; for that Humphries was the best fellow in the world, and if a young lady were to run off with him, she would never be sorry for it afterwards.

Just as dinner was announced, Harriet hurried into the room followed by Mr. Humphries, still attired in her riding habit; threw her hat on an ottoman, put her hand on her uncle's mouth to stop the remonstrance he was beginning to make, and desired him to find her a beau.

Mr. Singleton turned to look for George Gage, but he, in the same moment, offered his arm to Margaret and led her off. Harriet saw the manœuvre by which he avoided being her neighbour at dinner; she willingly accepted the arm of Mr.

Humphries, transferred herself to the opposite side of the table, just under Mr. Gage's eye, and then began a very systematic flirtation with her partner. She talked to him of dogs and horses until he became really animated, and so engrossed that he could hardly be made to understand that Mr. Singleton wished to take wine with him. She complimented him on his choice in those articles until she so overpowered him with pleasant confusion that he repeatedly threatened to disappear under the table-cloth, and she suffered him to talk upon choir singing, opera singing, glee singing, and all other singing, with an eager interest that was sufficiently visible to the whole table.

Margaret glanced uneasily at Mr. Gage, who had placed himself beside her. Once or twice, when Harriet was most animated, he glanced at her and her companion with an air of some surprise and curiosity, but with a more complete appearance of indifference than might have been expected.

It was plain that he was not quite so much the slave of her flexible moods as Harriet would fain have made him.

And Margaret thought with a sigh, that these two persons, so strongly and constantly attached, would go through life without ever coming to an understanding, because each was too proud to let the other see how unchanged their first feelings had remained.

To the company around the table, Mr. Gage appeared to be entirely engrossed by his beautiful neighbour, in whose ear he was whispering a variety of pleasing nothings; while the match between Harriet and Mr. Humphries, long pending and often doubted, was now declared to be finally arranged. They had made and accepted the proposal at the pond, and she was civil to him, at last, in her manners. It was high time that she should be civil to some one—perhaps marriage would improve her—and really she had been out some years, and was glad, no doubt, to take any one who came for-

ward. So said Mrs. Pottinger and Mrs. Markham; and Harriet's spoilt and wayward temper left no milder impression upon the greater number of her country neighbours.

But Mr. Singleton, when the dessert was set on the table, observed, with some alarm, the flushed cheek and sparkling eye of his niece.

"Hallo, Harriet!" he exclaimed.

"Well, Sir," she replied.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing at all, good uncle; let me recommend you to attend to your claret, instead of staring me out of countenance."

"Don't go and catch cold again—that's all," said Mr. Singleton.

"Never fear, Sir," returned Harriet, shortly.

"Are you subject to colds?" asked Mr. Humphries.

"Not at all. I have one now and then, like other people."

" You have them very badly when they do come," said Mr. Singleton.

" I don't know a greater bore," said Mr. Humphries, " but if you will do what I tell you, Miss Conway—now don't laugh, I will undertake to cure you."

" Thank you, I will be sure to apply to you, when I have any occasion for your skill," said Harriet, glancing at her aunt, who being too deaf to follow the progress of conversation, trusted to the bright eyes of her niece for intelligence of the moment at which it was desirable to make the move. Mrs. Singleton rose, and the ladies flocked into the drawing-room.

Harriet, not caring to remain the whole evening in her habit, went upstairs to change her costume, while Margaret placed herself beside Mrs. Singleton, and helped her in some of the work she had in hand. She possessed the art of making herself heard by means of a very low and clear intonation ; and Mrs. Singleton enjoyed with

her a pleasure she had almost surrendered in general; the pleasure of maintaining an unbroken conversation.

"I'll warrant, now," said Harriet, when she returned, "I'll warrant, my good aunt is becoming fonder of that little staid piece of propriety than of me. How say you, Aunt Singleton?"

"Why, niece Harriet," said the old lady, looking up quaintly from her canvass, "if you do not take great care, and behave very well, there is no saying what may happen."

"I defy you, aunt!" said Harriet, suddenly kissing her. "Come here, ma mie," she added, drawing Margaret aside; "were you flirting with George at dinner."

"No, indeed, Harriet," returned Margaret, smiling; "ever since I have known you, he has found it very convenient to be civil when you are present; but I should be silly, indeed, if I could not read through that."

"Ha, ha!" said Harriet. "You are a

surprising little creature; for he is not a person to despise. I mean in point of manner and appearance."

"I wish you made that opinion of yours a little more evident," said Margaret, archly.

"Why, you bold little creature," returned Harriet; "advising me to tell a gentleman I admire him. What do you say to that, Aunt Singleton."

"Oh, fie! Niece Harriet," said Mrs. Singleton, shaking her head.

"No, but you don't understand, Aunt Singleton: this is Margaret's plan, not mine."

"Oh fie! Niece Harriet," repeated Mrs. Singleton.

"It is not my plan, is it, Margaret?" said Harriet, laughing. "By the way, do I talk hoarsely?"

"I think you do, a little."

"Then my good uncle is right, and I am going to have a cold: my throat is very uncomfortable. I will tell you what you

must do to-night—take my place at the piano with Mr. Humphries. You can sing ten times better than I can."

"But I do so dislike singing in company. People are always bored by good music."

"People, my love, are bored if you sing; but they are enraged if you don't. Choose the least evil."

"Mr. Humphries, Miss Capel will take the first of that fine duet in Norma, 'Qual cor tradisti:' you will then hear the purest mezzo soprano in England."

Mr. Humphries gave a wide smile, and offered his hand to lead Margaret to the piano. Harriet drew a low, easy chair, close to the instrument, wrapped a scarf round her throat, and gave her attention to the singing.

"How greatly you have delighted us all," said Mr. Gage to Margaret, when she left the piano; "you have never before allowed us to know that you were a very beautiful singer."

"Won't you sing something now, Miss Conway?" asked Mr. Humphries.

"I cannot— I have a sore throat coming. You must sing for me," said Harriet.

"Dear me, I am very sorry," said Mr. Humphries, "then I am afraid you won't be able to hunt on Thursday."

"Not a chance of it," replied Harriet. "Evan, are those new books ever coming down from London?"

"I am sorry I cannot inform you; but I am not a prophet even in the small Highland way of second sight. Only that as all the ladies are wishing to get the new novels first, one may presume that some among them are doomed to be disappointed."

"I shall send you up to town for Coningsby," said Harriet.

"There is nothing at all unreasonable in that," replied her brother calmly. "But, perhaps, it would be cheaper for me, and quite as rapid for you, if you were to order it of the T—— bookseller."

"I have a great many books at home, Miss Conway, if you want anything to read," said Mr. Humphries.

"I am much obliged; you are all kindness," returned Harriet very gravely, "I dare say *you* read a great deal."

"No, not so much as you would think," said Mr. Humphries, all unconscious of irony; "what with hunting, and shooting, and angling—I am very fond of angling—the whole year passes away. But my mother is always reading."

"Said mother," said Harriet, pulling Margaret close to her, and wheeling her chair a little out of the circle, "said mother has a dower-house to which to retire whenever the seal marries; so don't let the vision of a cross old woman always reading 'Nelson's Fasts and Festivals' deter you; if you have a mind."

"Oh, Harriet! you should not make me laugh before all the people."

"No, you stand it vastly well; you look

very demure I assure you. His name is *William*."

These last words pronounced in a very pathetic tone of voice, rather tended to discompose the tranquillity upon which she had complimented her friend; but Margaret took the chair at a sufficient distance to protect her from Harriet's provoking asides. George Gage and Mr. Humphries came and talked to her; the other young ladies occupied the piano in turn, and so the evening passed.

CHAPTER IV.

Young ladies, sir, are long and curious
In putting on their trims; forget how day goes
And then 'tis their good morrow when they are ready.
* * * *
I warrant ye a hundred dressings now
She has surveyed—this and that fashion looked on,
For ruffs and gowns.

WOMEN PLEASED.

MARGARET was hardly awake the next morning, before she received a message from Harriet requesting to see her as soon as she was dressed, and having hastened this ceremony, she found her friend sitting up in bed very flushed, very hoarse, but evidently much pleased with something.

"Do not kiss me, ma mie," said she, holding Margaret at arm's length, "you shall

not catch this cold; but look here—your ticket for the T—— ball. I was so afraid they might be all gone, as the ball takes place the day after to-morrow; but one of my few friends sent me this, so now set Mrs. Mason to work as fast as possible.

Margaret was young enough to feel elated at the thought of a ball; her eyes sparkled as she received the ticket, but recollecting the state of her friend, evidently on the borders of a severe cold, she strongly urged that they should give up all idea of the ball, it was of no consequence; certainly not worth running any risk.

Harriet was always positive in what she undertook, and she would not hear of a single objection. She meant to keep her room until they set off to the ball. She had not caught a cold but a chill, which was a very different thing; so she thrust a small bunch of keys into Margaret's hand, and told her to run down as the chapel bell was ringing, and to take her post at the breakfast table.

Mr. Humphries was at prayers, and accompanied her from the chapel. He mustered courage to pay her some awkward compliment upon her regular attendance. But Margaret, who was very reserved upon any subject connected with the feelings, said quietly, that she was very glad to take advantage of so good a custom, and then hastened to pay her respects to Mrs. Singleton and to commence her task of tea-making.

When Mr. Gage came in, he looked surprised to see Margaret in Harriet's place, coldly expressed his regret when he was told the reason; commended Miss Capel's superior prudence of the preceding evening, and then sat down quietly to his breakfast, and appeared to dismiss the subject from his mind.

During the day all the people who had been staying in the house, dropped off, one by one. Mr. Evan Conway took himself to some friend's house at the other end of the county. Mr. Gage and Mr. Hum-

phries went out riding; and Margaret devoted herself to her friend.

At dinner, Mr. Gage did not condescend to make the commonest enquiries respecting Harriet's progress, which Margaret thought very ill-bred. But Mr. Humphries made up for his want of civility.

Mr. Singleton, who was very fond of this young man, made the approaching ball, an excuse for asking him to stay in the house for a short time; and Mr. Humphries, nothing loth to exchange for a while the crabbed society of his honoured mother for that of two pretty and accomplished women, accepted with readiness.

Margaret passed the evening with Harriet, who appeared much better, and in high spirits. She exhibited to Margaret her ball-dress. A black net, trimmed with clusters of carnations, with all the costly et ceteras of her toilet.

"You are always effective in your dress," said Margaret, looking at the gold net-work which Harriet was to wear on her head.

"That is the secret," said Harriet, "some people love to be in the fashion. Others think it distinguished to be plain; but give me effect. There is a great deal of sly effect in your white crape and blush roses, little one."

For Mason, with her usual prudence, had anticipated the materials for a ball dress, which she was now preparing with much skill and contentment.

Harriet took up her guitar and sang Margaret a Spanish song, then handing her the instrument, she bade her go on with the concert.

Margaret began a Barcarolle—preesntly a loud knock at the door.

"Olà! what now?" exclaimed Harriet.

"May we come in?" asked Mr. Singleton, putting his head in at the door.

"What is the meaning of We?" asked Harriet.

"Humphries and your humble servant," replied Mr. Singleton, almost shutting his head off in the door as he spoke.

"Well, I don't know! eh, Margaret?—Yes," returned Harriet, glancing round her boudoir. The maid had removed the ball dresses, and the room was very fit for a reception.

Mr. Humphries followed Mr. Singleton with a step much as if he were treading on eggs, and was very sorry for it.

Harriet held out her hand. "How glad I am to see you again, Mr. Humphries. I hope you are come to engage me to dance with you on Thursday."

Mr. Humphries smiled amazingly at this reception.

"Yes. I—I'm glad," he said, by way of reply.

"Well, but about the dancing," said Harriet eagerly.

"Oh! Will you dance the second quadrille with me, Miss Conway?"

"With pleasure, on one condition. That you will tell me who you have engaged for the first?"

A wide smile, but no answer.

"Well, Mr. Humphries, you are not going to be so rude as to refuse my request. I know I am to keep it secret. Come, tell me."

"I can't," returned Mr. Humphries, going through several convulsive movements.

"Is he not ill-natured, uncle Singleton?" asked Harriet, "I am sure I would tell Mr. Humphries, if I knew who was to be my first partner."

"But you will dance with me all the same?" asked Mr. Humphries.

"Well, I will then," said Harriet laughing; "but I am very angry with you."

Margaret had laid down the guitar and was standing in the Tudor window, pulling the dry leaves from the geraniums. Mr. Humphries joined her.

"Gage is down stairs with Mrs. Singleton," he said.

"So I thought," returned Margaret.

"They are playing at chess together."

"Are they, indeed!"

"Do you like chess, Miss Capel?"

"Not very much, Mr. Humphries."

"No more do I."

"Ha! ha! there's sympathy," cried Harriet, leaning back in her chair to gain a full view of them among the geraniums.

Mr. Singleton laughed heartily, and told Harriet not to spoil sport.

Mr. Humphries coloured, and tried to get more effectually behind the flower stands.

"Miss Conway is always laughing at one," he said.

Margaret could not deny it.

"But what I was going to say," remarked Mr. Humphries, coming close to Margaret and whispering. "Will you dance the first quadrille with me?"

"With pleasure," said Margaret, smiling.

"Thank you—you see I could not tell Miss Conway just now, because I did not know myself, till I had asked you."

"No, you could not, indeed."

"Well, I'm going now," he exclaimed, suddenly taking her hand. "God bless you!"

"Did you sneeze, Margaret?" asked Harriet, turning quickly round.

Mr. Humphries was walking fast to the door.

Margaret supposed the explanation was meant as a farewell, for he stopped at the door, said "good night!" accompanied by an extraordinary nod of the head, and vanished.

"That is one of the best fellows that ever lived," said Mr. Singleton, nodding at the door through which Mr. Humphries had departed.

"What do you say to that assertion, Margaret?" asked Harriet, looking mischievously at her.

"I will take Mr. Singleton's word for it," replied Margaret, with her usual calmness.

"But he is not the best dancer that ever

lived, Uncle Singleton," said Harriet, laughing, "as Margaret will find to her cost. Come, he has set you a very good example. Vanish! and good night to you. And, uncle," she added, calling him back, "had you not better, in the course of the evening, take an opportunity to ask Mr. Humphries his intentions?"

Mr. Singleton was well used to Harriet's jests; he laughed, shook his head, and left the room.

CHAPTER V.

But nature never framed a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice;
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

"WELL, ma mie, and what is it?" asked Harriet, as Margaret came hastily into her room while she was dressing for the ball. "Anything gone wrong with the blush roses."

"I am come about some blush roses," said Margaret, holding out a beautiful bouquet. "I do not know how it is, Harriet, but I found these on my toilet when I went up to dress."

"And who do you think gave me these

carnations," asked Harriet, pointing to a splendid cluster of those flowers placed in a glass vase. "The fairies have matched our trimmings, that is all, Margaret. Blush roses for you—carnations for me."

"No, but is it your doing, Harriet?" asked Margaret earnestly.

"Faith, no;" said Harriet laughing, "who do you suspect; Mr. Humphries has not the wit, though you have so barbarously—"

"Harriet! do not accuse me."

"I do not know who would think me worth a bouquet," said Harriet, going composedly on with her toilet; perhaps young Vesey, or Sir Hawarth Fane. I should not wonder if it were Sir Hawarth. I hope not, though."

"But it is so very disagreeble," said Margaret, "to be obliged to any one for a bouquet. I had much rather not wear it."

"Nonsense, child, it is quite proper—flowers, you know; if it were jewels it would be quite another thing. I dare say,

after all, it comes from George Gage; eh! Charlotte?"

"La, Miss Conway! how you do startle one."

"Yes, he bribed you to place these two nosegays on our tables."

"Well, Miss Conway, it is no use denying anything to you."

"There, Margaret, now your mind is at rest, go back and dress. What splendid hair you have, child."

Mr. Singleton was loud in his commendations of the two young ladies. He was to accompany them. Mr. Gage and Mr. Humphries went together. It appeared to Margaret that Mr. Singleton was asleep in his corner of the carriage, and she could not forbear whispering to Harriet. "Do be civil to Mr. Gage, to-night."

"Why, so I am always, am I not?" said Harriet, "civil as an orange."

"Oh! not to-day at dinner."

"I am sure I said nothing," said Harriet.

"No, it was your manner."

"Well, he was rude too," returned Harriet, "why did he not ask me to dance?"

'Because," said Margaret, "he took it for granted you would refuse him."

"He had no business to take it for granted," was Harriet's perverse reply; "if he does ask me now, I shall certainly decline."

It was an excellent ball; the room was very prettily got up, and all the families of any consideration, far and near, were present. Mr. Singleton and the two ladies became at once an object of great attention. They were remarkably well dressed, and their style of beauty, so opposite and so distinguished, that every one was employed in passing an opinion upon them. Several people came up to Mr. Singleton, and asked eagerly who was the beautiful girl with the crown of blush roses. Mr. Singleton informed them that she was a Miss Capel—very good family—charming girl—

excellent fortune—great friend of Harriet's. Almost all the ladies present disliked Harriet, and were delighted at the opportunity to set up a rival beauty. Had Margaret been poor, this would have been difficult; the men would have called her a pretty girl, and passed on to dance with somebody else; but as it was, Margaret was pronounced the belle of the ball-room, and besieged with requests for her hand from all quarters. She was engaged for the first quadrille, and was quite puzzled to remember and distinguish the numerous applicants for the succeeding dances. Mr. Gage entreated her to remember that her promise to dance with him was of very long standing, and having renewed it for the next waltz, he turned to Harriet, and begged for the honour of her hand. She was talking with her uncle, and just looked round with the words "Engaged, Mr. Gage." He bowed, and stepped back, and one of her numerous acquaintances coming up at the

moment, she walked off with him to the dancers.

Margaret danced very quietly and well; Harriet's dancing was superb. She was light as air, and the precision of her steps, and the foreign expression and grace of her movements, excited universal attention.

When waltzing began, and she floated round the room on the arm of a young Spaniard who had just been introduced to her, and who had been staying at Sir Evan Conway's, there was quite a crowd collected to watch her and her partner. Directly Harriet became aware of this, she stopped, retired within the circle with her companion, and there stood talking with him in Spanish until the dance was over. This was not from any feeling of bashfulness, but because she did not choose to exhibit for the amusement of the company.

"In England," as she said haughtily to her partner, "if one dances a little better

than a bear, one is actually mobbed in a ball-room!"

As soon as the waltz was over, the young Count led Harriet to her seat, and stood politely by her side, holding her flowers, and talking of the carnations of Andalusia. Harriet selected one of the finest, pulled it out of her bouquet, and gave it him. The Count very respectfully kissed her hand (a common courtesy in Spain), and placed the flower in his coat.

It may be supposed how excited all the ladies were. They *never had* seen in all their lives, such very indecorous behaviour in a public room. They really thought she ought to be desired to withdraw; and their anger was all the more pointed, as the Conde de F. was very distinguished in his appearance—was interesting from having taken an active part in some of the late Spanish squabbles, and was such a waltzer as no Englishman need ever hope to be.

George Gage, who was standing beside

Margaret, after looking arrogantly into every corner of the room, said that he had formerly thought the T—— ball very respectable, but that really to-night there was hardly a soul that one knew; and such a very—singular—set of beings, that he wondered how the two or three ladies who were present could find a change of partners. That, perhaps, as they knew nobody, Miss Capel would not object to honour him by taking another turn with him, when the next quadrille was over;—there was this advantage in waltzing, that you were not mixed up during the dance with Heaven knows who; and obliged, perhaps, to give your hand to a hair-dresser in passing. Margaret looked very arch during this speech, but she offered no opposition to Mr. Gage's remarks. She was, still, half afraid of him. She could not help seeing that he interrupted himself half-a-dozen times during his speech to bow to different people who had the honour of his acquaintance; and the

thought crossed her mind, that a hair-dresser was not very likely to gain admittance to a county ball.

Every moment some one or other was coming up to Harriet to solicit her hand. Some she refused, some she evaded, some she put on her list. She was engaged in a sparkling conversation with the Spanish nobleman, which grew every moment more and more animated.

The Conde had come to the ball solely for the chance of meeting the Senorita, and she seemed determined to make it as agreeable to him as possible.

Mr. Singleton brought Margaret a partner, who had been very eager for an introduction. She was next to Harriet in the Mazourka, which was still rare enough to excite a good deal of attention. Every one not engaged in the figure stood round to watch the dancers. Mr. Gage, with Margaret's bouquet in his hand, leaned against a pillar, following with his eyes the graceful movements of Harriet and the Conde. A

party, who had just entered the room, made their way into the front of the circle, and as Margaret was standing while Harriet and her partner were in the centre, the Conde on his knee, and Harriet passing round him, she heard a loud assured voice exclaim, "Heavens, Collins! what a handsome man."

She turned her head, and beheld a large middle-aged woman, with red hair, and a very plain face, extravagantly dressed, and leaning on the arm of a very young man, apparently under twenty. She was in a lace dress of great value, with a gold cord and tassels round her waist, and her arms loaded with bracelets, while the front of her dress was decorated with beetles, locusts, scorpions, and other reptiles in jewellery, after a fashion that was then making a great noise in Paris. The young man held a gold pomander-box and a flaçon, with the lady's bouquet and handkerchief: an elderly man stood a little behind with an Indian shawl over his arm.

"They are foreigners," said Mr. Collins, directing his glass towards Harriet and the Conde.

"Is he not handsome?" asked the lady.

"I think the girl the best looking," returned the young man.

"No—do you? Fan me, Collins, there's a good soul."

Mr. Collins unfurled her fan, fringed with swansdown, and proceeded to fan the "large lady."

"Is there any one here one knows?" said the lady, turning her head a little towards the elderly man.

"No, my dear, I think not," he replied.

"Ah, dear Paris!" said the lady, with a powerful sigh.

"Ah!" returned Mr. Collins.

"Could not we sit down somewhere?" asked the lady.

Way was made for her through the circle, and she sank on a bench. Mr. Collins stood fanning her.

"Do go and look for some ice, Collins, I am perishing with heat," said the lady.

"I'll try," replied the obedient Mr. Collins.

"That's a pretty modest girl—there—with the blush roses," said the lady, addressing her husband.

"Yes, my love," returned the good gentleman.

"What time did you order the carriage?"

"At two, dearest."

"What ice is this, Collins? Pine? Oh! it's pretty good; as well as one can expect in this remote corner of the earth. There, I feel better now."

Mr. Collins obsequiously held her ice-plate. "Will you dance to-night?" he asked, leaning over her.

"Why—I think I will take a few turns when the waltzing begins," she replied.

The Mazourka finished, Margaret went to claim her bouquet of Mr. Gage; but to

her dismay, she found him leaning against the pillar in profound thought, and the floor quite strewn with the delicate leaves of her blush roses. He started on seeing her; seemed rather confused, a most unusual thing for him, and began to attempt some apology for his depredations.

He could only hope that Miss Capel would not again leave him to the mercy of his own reflections, now that she saw how badly he employed his leisure. He scarcely knew how to palliate his offence, for he was aware of the importance of a lady's bouquet.

Margaret, smiling archly, received the remains of her bouquet with a very good grace, and said that she suspected Mr. Gage had a better right to dispose of the flowers than she had.

He replied by a gracious bow and smile, and begged her with much humility to allow him to conduct her to the refreshment room.

There they found Harriet and the Spa-

nish Count, standing eating ice and wafers. Harriet laughing and talking, the Conde keeping his eyes fixed upon her with that watchful admiration, that is very nearly allied to a more tender feeling.

Harriet turned quickly round to Margaret, leaned close to her ear, and exclaimed:

"My dear Margaret, such a discovery! Did you notice a large woman, superbly dressed, who came in during the Mazourka?"

"Yes," replied Margaret.

"Mrs. Maxwell Dorset, my dear!" said Harriet enforcing her words with a tap of her fan.

Margaret's face expressed, in a slight degree, her unspeakable surprise at this piece of news.

"A fact, my dear," resumed Harriet. "I am going to ask George to introduce me to her."

Margaret caught her friend by the arm as she was pressing forward.

"Harriet! you cannot be in earnest," she exclaimed, "you must be jesting—such

a character. I am sure no friend of yours would present you."

"What a very innocent little soul!" said Harriet, drawing back, with a touch of scorn in her voice. "The lady's character is as fair as yours or mine. You may impeach her taste, Margaret, but not her virtue, for there stands her guarantee—her husband, good easy man! She merely takes presents of value from her admirers, instead of bouquets, like you and I. 'Men's eyes were made to gaze,' *ma mie*, and a beautiful woman may be admired, I hope, without being sent to Coventry for the offence."

"But after all that has past, Harriet," said Margaret, imploringly, "indeed, it would be very wrong to ask Mr. Gage."

"My dear, let 'bygones be bygones,'" said Harriet with an air of decision. "I wish Mr. Gage you would introduce me to that lady opposite—Mrs. Maxwell Dorset. I have a great inclination to become ac-

quainted with her." Harriet spoke with unusual suavity of manner.

Mr. Gage raised his eyebrows and looked at her for a moment with astonishment, and then without losing his self-possession, as she had hoped, he replied that he very much regretted it was entirely out of his power to comply with Miss Conway's request.

Harriet's eyes flashed fire; she turned away and went back to the ball-room, where she directly engaged Margaret to dance with the Conde de F—— who was still in attendance upon her, and then after looking round on every side for some means of annoyance, she said calmly as if to herself, "I shall dance with Sir Hawarth Fane when he comes to ask me."

Mr. Gage, who well knew that this speech was pointed at him, remarked coldly, that he believed he had heard Sir Evan express a very decided opinion upon that subject.

Harriet looking every moment more resolute, repeated, "I shall dance with Sir Hawarth Fane."

Now the fact was, that Sir Hawarth Fane was one of the worst characters in the county, but he was a single man of large property, and therefore very well received in most families. He had given some decided proofs of admiration for Harriet; but Sir Evan had always required her to receive them as coldly as possible. Even Mr. Singleton had often begged her "for God's sake never to dance with that fellow Hawarth Fane."

Harriet received his homage as her due, had it been ten times more marked; treated him with the easy neglect she generally assumed towards her admirers, and never danced with him, for the single reason that he was forty years old, and had a red face.

Margaret could only hope that he would not make his appearance, but soon a stout figure was seen to emerge from the doorway, and with his glass in his eye, to look

eagerly about for some one. Mr. Gage looked as resolute as Harriet, and both turned their eyes in the direction of the advancing Baronet. Margaret was breathless. Harriet drew her handkerchief through the jewelled ring hanging to her bouquetière, and settled herself as if she meant to prepare for the next dance. It was quite clear, both to Mr. Gage and Margaret, that she had made up her mind. Mr. Gage looked like Creon, and Harriet like Antigone—neither spoke. Sir Hawarth who had been blundering about the room with his eye-glass, very much like a person who had sat a good deal too long after dinner, now caught sight of Harriet, and steered his course in her direction. Mr Gage leaned over Margaret, and whispered to her:

"Miss Capel, the man is a thorough blackguard; he shall not dance with Harriet. If you cannot prevent it—I *will*."

Margaret looked up at him with such a glance of quick intelligence, as he could not have believed her to possess.

"Harriet!" she said, as Sir Hawarth

neared them, "if you dance with that man, I will leave Singleton Manor to-morrow morning."

"You!" said Harriet, turning quickly upon her.

"I will," returned Margaret.

"I dare say," said Harriet laughing scornfully, "but I won't let you. I will lock you up in the store-room among the apricots."

"I am in earnest," said Margaret, "take your choice."

"The pleasure of dancing the next quadrille with you, Miss Conway," said Sir Hawarth Fane, evidently rather intoxicated.

"Engaged, Sir Hawarth," replied Harriet in some confusion, her colour rose, her breath grew short, she was evidently in much agitation.

"Engaged! I am deucedly sorry for that," said Sir Hawarth in a thick voice, "I'll wait till after this quadrille, and per-

haps I may prevail on you to galop with me afterwards.

He certainly looked in a charming condition for a galop. Harriet replied that she was really sorry, but that they were to leave the ball-room after the next dance.

Sir Hawarth muttered something about his being in confounded ill-luck; and that there was not another woman in the room worth dancing with.

"And pray," he whispered, "could not you be off your engagement? Is it any very particular person? Who is it, if I may be so bold?"

The dancers were collecting; Harriet, not knowing how to answer, and aware that he was not quite composed in his mind, glanced uneasily round the room. Mr. Gage coming forward in the most natural manner, said easily:

"Now, Miss Conway, if you will do me the honour—"

Harriet took his arm, and joined the dancers.

"Oh!" said Sir Hawarth, satisfied that her plea of an engagement was genuine.

Harriet's anger was magnificent. She felt that for once she had lost her self-command, when she excused herself on the plea of being *engaged*; she, who never hesitated to refuse a partner upon the most trivial reason, and frequently upon no reason at all; and whose right to do so was tolerably well established. She to commit herself! To put herself in the power of Mr. Gage—to be obliged to dance with him to cover a blunder of her own. It was insupportable.

Mr. Gage moved through the figure as carelessly as possible. Harriet never danced a step, hardly vouchsafed her fingers' ends, when it was requisite to give her hand, and never directed to him a single glance from those stormy, dark eyes, that seemed to burn beneath her haughty brows. She never uttered a word even to those about her, but employed herself in opening and shutting her emblazoned fan with the

jerk peculiar to Spanish women, which movement completely diverted the eyes of the Conde from his partner to herself. It brought his country more completely home to him than even the pure Castilian in which she had been so ably conversing.

As soon as the quadrille was over, and before the dancers had time to disperse, Harriet turned from her partner without the slightest gesture of acknowledgment, and making a sign to Margaret, walked into the cloak-room, followed by seven or eight gentlemen, more or less in despair at her early departure. She suffered the Conde to put on her shawl, and hand her into the carriage, and parted from him with a smile, and a verse from Calderon. Mr. Humphries and Mr. Gage both attended Margaret, and then got into their own conveyance.

There was a profound silence for a short time. Mr. Singleton felt that something was wrong, and was really so much under the dominion of his niece, that he hardly ventured to make a remark. At last he

made bold to say that it was a very good ball.

" Very," replied Margaret.

Harriet said nothing.

Mr. Singleton then complimented Margaret upon the number of hearts she had won, and said he expected to be besieged the next day by her different suitors.

Margaret said that Mr. Singleton was very flattering, and thought no more of the effect she was said to have produced.

" Well, Harriet," said Mr. Singleton after he had cleared his throat two or three times, " you were rather in a hurry to come away this evening."

" Yes, Sir," returned Harriet, in a short decided tone.

" How was that, eh?" asked her uncle.

" I was bored," returned Harriet as shortly as before.

This was conclusive, and an ominous silence prevailed. Margaret feared that Harriet was mortally offended with her, and began to think that her threat of leav-

ing Singleton Manor the next day might come to be put in practice. She felt constrained—distressed. There was not light enough to see Harriet's face, and she hardly knew how to end her suspense. At last she timidly put her hand into that of her wilful friend. Harriet snatched hold of it, and pressed it suddenly to her lips. Margaret was almost affected to tears by this little incident. She hoped that the storm had blown over, but she was satisfied that, at least, Harriet's displeasure did not extend to her.

As soon as the carriage door was opened, Harriet sprang out without waiting for the steps to be let down, and dashed through the hall into the drawing-room. Mr. Singleton saying something about "a storm brewing," handed Margaret out and followed his niece.

She took up her night-candle, nodded to her uncle and beckoned Margaret to follow her: As soon as she reached her dressing-room, she began in silence to take off her

ornaments from her dress and hair. Then she held out her hand at a little distance, and watched it for a few moments with great attention. It trembled.

"Margaret, ma mie," said she, raising her head. "I am going to be ill; will you mind sleeping with me for once?"

Margaret willingly gave her consent. Harriet stooped over her desk, and hastily wrote a few lines on a scrap of paper.

"If I am hors-de-combat to-morrow, Margaret," she said, "give this to Mr. Gage."

A stamp of her slender foot, as she pronounced his name, was the only indication of feeling that she betrayed.

Margaret really did not know if it was a cartel of defiance, but she thought it better to promise compliance.

"Then kiss me, ma mie, and go to sleep," said Harriet, "we will talk over our adventures to-morrow."

CHAPTER VI.

Mar. Yes, a letter.
She brings no challenge sure.
THE MAID IN THE MILL.

Val. He must not then be angry
That loses her.
Gom. Oh! that were Sir, unworthy.
Mir. A little sorrow he may find.
Val. 'Tis manly.
THE KNIGHT OF MALTA.

THE next morning Harriet was in a high fever. Mr. Singleton said she had nobody to thank for it but herself. She had no business at a ball when she was suffering from a severe cold, unless she had chosen to go in a fur cloak. That he wondered how any ladies escaped without catching their death at such places; and that he hoped the servant who was gone

for the doctor would not be an hour on the road. Margaret seriously alarmed about her friend, had been making the breakfast in silence, until Mr. Singleton's attack upon Harriet led her to say, with tearful eyes, that she believed Harriet had gone to the ball entirely on her account, and that she felt so very sorry she had not more decidedly opposed it.

Mr. Gage, who had said nothing upon the subject in any way, and who had hardly seemed to know Harriet was not at table, now begged Margaret not to allow herself to feel any concern on that point, for that he believed Miss Conway had been always rather remarkable for her imprudences. Margaret always disliked his polite phrases, and the persuasive interest of his manner, but now they seemed more than ever out of place. The slip of paper that Harriet had entrusted to her was lying folded by her side—she had no idea what it might contain; but now, seeing Mr. Humphries standing at the window with Mr. Singleton,

she took it up timidly, and said with a little hesitation:—"Harriet desired me to give you this paper, Mr. Gage."

He took it up very politely, glanced at it. and handed it back to her. It contained only two words:—"*Go away.*"

He drew his chair nearer to Margaret, glanced at the window, and then said in a low voice:—"Perhaps you will tell Miss Conway, that my respect for Mr. and Mrs. Singleton will not admit of my complying *immediately* with her demand."

"I will," said Margaret.

She felt pleased with his reply, and with his straightforward manner; and she hoped that she was not considered a party concerned in so abrupt a missive. And yet she could hardly help laughing, it appeared to her so very ridiculous.

Mr. Gage took up the paper and looked at it again. "I think I need hardly *write* an answer," he said.

He seemed as little inclined to be grave as Margaret. She assured him that she

would deliver his message faithfully. He twisted up the paper, and seemed about to burn it, when he drew it back, said it was really worth preserving, and added something, as if to himself, about its being "so like a spoilt child."

Like most men, who think a spoilt child the perfection of womankind, until they have her, when their opinion changes inconveniently fast.

Then turning to Margaret, who was about to leave the room, he said "that he could not avoid expressing his thanks for her skilful interference last night; that it was most kind in her to undertake so difficult and unpleasing a task; and for himself, he was grateful to her for preventing what might have been annoying to all parties."

Margaret thought he could not have been more glad than she was to prevent a scene; she made some quiet remark to his compliment, and went back to her friend's room.

For three days, Margaret was a voluntary prisoner with Harriet. Every morning after

breakfast, when she was locking up the tea-chest, Mr. Humphries made it a point to sidle up to her, and ask "if she could not make him of any use; if he should not drive over to G——, and get any thing for Miss Conway." He likewise, at the same period, warned Miss Capel against the dangers of attending too closely upon her sick friend.

"It is all very well for a day, you know," he said, "but how any body can stand being shut up in a sick room for so long, I can't imagine; and I really think, Miss Capel, I——" and here Mr. Humphries looked round, as if he was anxious to hide behind some of the furniture, "I think, indeed, you are beginning to look pale."

"Oh! I shall do very well," said Margaret, smiling, "Harriet will soon be down stairs, I hope."

"And in the meantime," said Mr. Gage, with deep anxiety, "I fear you are injuring your health by your kind exertions."

Margaret thought he might as well ex-

pend a little of his interest upon Harriet's health, which at that time was in rather a more precarious state than hers, but she said "it was a pleasure to her to sit with Harriet, for she well knew how long the days appeared in illness."

"That is very— I mean it is just what I—you are all goodness, I am sure," faltered Mr. Humphries.

Mr. Gage could not but feel the most sovereign contempt for the manner in which Mr. Humphries attempted to show his interest for Margaret: instead of whispering a well-turned phrase into her long tresses, to stand blushing and stammering like an idiot. So after staring haughtily at both for a moment, he loitered away to the stable.

Margaret had a note to write for Harriet, and as during this process her eyes were fixed on the paper, Mr. Humphries found it less difficult to keep up a conversation with her.

"Does Miss Conway make a good invalid?" he said.

"Yes, indeed," said Margaret, "she is very patient."

"You would be very patient," said Mr. Humphries, with his usual gesture of attempting to hide under the table.

"I hope so," said Margaret, gently; "but sickness is a great trial to every body, Mr. Humphries."

"I don't think," began Mr. Humphries, looking fixedly at the beautiful fingers that were engaged in folding the note:—"that is, I think—if you were to nurse people, they would not need to be much pitied."

This sentence, which was spoken very fast, and accompanied by strong signs of bashfulness, was received by Margaret as one of the ordinary civilities which young men are in the habit of paying. She carefully traced the direction, and, pausing at the last word, said calmly:—

"Let me see, is Lockwood in Worcestershire or Somersetshire, Mr. Humphries?"

"In Worcestershire," said Mr. Humphries, relieved by finding that his speech

had produced no greater effect,—for he had grown extremely red in the face, and felt like a person who had fired a train, and expected some terrible explosion to take place.

However, he had composure enough left to light her a taper, and find the sealing wax, but before Margaret could make use of it, Harriet's maid rushed into the room, and with signs of great agitation informed her that her mistress was much worse, and as she thought, light-headed.

Margaret hastily left the note for Mr. Humphries to seal and dispatch, and ran up stairs. Harriet was much worse; quite delirious, and holding forth to Mrs. Singleton with great eagerness; while she, poor lady, perfectly unable to hear a word she uttered, had no idea of the real state of the case. Margaret saw it directly, took Mrs. Singleton aside, and informed her of Harriet's condition, sent off a servant for a medical man, and took her place firmly by her friend's bedside.

Before night, Harriet was very ill,—was worse—was in danger. Margaret would not go down to dinner; but the kind Mrs. Singleton would not allow her to remain in the room all the evening. She sent her into the drawing-room to make tea, and begged her to remain there till bed time.

Mr. Singleton was walking up and down the room, whistling discordantly. He came up to Margaret, thanked her repeatedly for her kindness to Harriet, and rang the bell for the urn.

Mr. Gage and Mr. Humphries joined her at the tea-table.

"I have not seen you since breakfast," said Mr. Gage, bending across the tea-cups, "how much I have regretted your absence."

Now Margaret was in very low spirits, feeling solitary and frightened, and perhaps his being a Gage inspired her with confidence, and made her feel a claim upon his sympathy, for she turned her eyes, filled with tears, upon him, and said:—

"Harriet is so ill, Mr. Gage!"

"I am sorry to hear it," he replied coldly.

This sudden check did not produce the effect upon Margaret that it might upon some people. She never cried upon such occasions: she forced back her tears at once, and sat cold and silent.

Mr. Humphries handed her toast and cakes in vain.

Mr. Gage rose, and employed himself in altering the lamp.

"Does the doctor come again this evening, Miss Capel?" asked Mr. Singleton.

"Yes, Sir, the last thing," replied Margaret, "he asked when the house would be shut up, but Mrs. Singleton desired him to name his own time, and he appointed eleven."

"It is just ten now," said Mr. Singleton, looking at his watch.

Mr. Gage looked at his watch too, which did not seem at all necessary, and then altered the lamp again.

"Who sits up with Harriet to night?" asked Mr. Singleton.

"Her maid, Sir; Mrs. Singleton would not hear of my sitting up."

"Perfectly right," said Mr. Gage, "if I were Mrs. Singleton, I should be inclined to forbid you the room altogether; you run a great risk of infection."

"I am sure," said Mr. Humphries, "I wish I could be of use; I only wish I could sit up, that's all."

Mr. Gage remarked with much disdain, "that his sitting up with a young lady would possess, at least, the charm of novelty;" and then he turned away and loitered to the fire-place.

Mr. Humphries drew his chair closer to Margaret.

"This is very dull for you, Miss Capel," he began.

"Very sad for me," said Margaret.

"You are not afraid of being with Miss Conway?"

"Not at all; I never was timid about infection."

"I think—(a long pause)— I think you are an angel, Miss Capel."

"Do you, Mr. Humphries," said Margaret unconsciously; her whole mind occupied with Harriet's illness, and the unkind indifference displayed by Mr. Gage.

For a little while Mr. Humphries had to endure a paroxysm of bashfulness; when he recovered, the first words he uttered were: "I like you very much!"

Margaret, who was fitting a steel pen into a mother of pearl handle, replied: "you are very good, Mr. Humphries. Is not this a pretty pen?"

He took it in his clumsy way, and then began to laugh.

"I—I meant," he began; but here his courage failed him, and he gave her back the pen, looking suspiciously at Mr. Singleton and George Gage, who were conversing in whispers at the other end of the room.

"Can you tell me what o'clock it is, Mr. Humphries?" asked Margaret.

"Twenty minutes to eleven."

"Thank you."

"I shall not hunt to-morrow, Miss Capel," said Mr. Humphries, "somehow—"

He wanted an interpreter; "somehow," meant that while Harriet was ill, he did not think he should quite enjoy a run with the hounds. Margaret understood his meaning and smiled.

Mr. Humphries returned her smile with his usual breadth of expression, revealing a perfect semicircle of dazzling teeth, and then said: "Coming home from hunting, last time—"

"Yes, Mr. Humphries."

"Gage, and I—"

"Yes, Mr. Humphries."

"I wish you would say yes always!"

Here a prodigious smile, and the usual symptoms of vanishing under the table.

"But it would not make sense always, Mr. Humphries," replied Margaret.

"You said that day, you did not believe that people could be in love twice."

"I thought you said so, and I agreed to

it," said Margaret, still looking at the pen-holder.

"No, I didn't; you did."

"Oh! was that it? I think it must be near eleven."

Margaret laid down the pen, and rose to leave the room.

Mr. Humphries thought he had better make haste.

"Miss Capel, I say, were you ever in love?" he stammered in much confusion.

Margaret was certainly a little startled. She had been so engrossed by her own thoughts that she had not observed the progress her companion was making.

"If I ever have been," she said tranquilly, "as I am now single, Mr. Humphries, you must suppose it would be an unpleasant subject for me to touch upon."

He seemed struck by her calm, grave manner, but he stumbled on.

"Because, I was in love once—with a very nice girl—when I was at Christ Church; but, for all that, I feel as if—I should be in love again—"

Margaret held out her hand, and said gently, but coldly, "Good night, Mr. Humphries."

He took her hand, kissed it, seemed very much inclined to cry, but let her pass him without a word. He had perfectly understood her manner.

CHAPTER VII.

Parlar di te non voglio, e fra le labbra
Ho sempre il nome tuo : vò dal pensiero
Cancellar quel sembiante e in ogni oggetto
Col pensier lo dipingo.

METASTASIO.

In rapid attacks of illness, like that which Harriet suffered from, there is, fortunately, no very long interval of suspense for those interested in the patient.

The next day she was much better, and the day after was able to sit up by her dressing-room fire, and talk and laugh pretty much as usual.

"Oh! by the way," said Harriet, interrupting a lively discussion upon some trifling subject, "did Mr. Gage ever con-

descend to enquire after me while I was ill?"

Margaret had rather feared this question, but she was obliged to reply that he had not.

Harriet seemed more disturbed by this proof of his indifference than Margaret had ever before seen her.

After a pause she said: "Did he seem—" then, suddenly interupting herself, she exclaimed, "Pshaw! I will not stoop to enquire what he seemed. Perhaps," she added, after another pause, "I had no reason to expect anything else from him."

"I thought it very unkind," said Margaret.

Harriet nodded her head in acquiescence, and remained silently gazing into the fire. Once or twice she felt for her handkerchief, and drew it hastily across her eyes as if she did not wish to be observed.

"The fire makes one's eyes weak," she said at last.

Margaret agreed to it

"Oh! by the way, how do you get on with Mr. Humphries?" said Harriet, rousing herself.

"He was always very considerate," said Margaret, "and extremely sorry for your illness."

"He is a good soul," said Harriet, "You had better think twice, before you throw him away."

"I do not throw him away," said Margaret smiling; "but I confess I have no desire to captivate him."

"He would make a very good husband, ma mie."

"I dare say," replied Margaret, "but it is all very much out of my way."

"Why you cannot mean to be single for ever," said Harriet. "I assure you I often think who I shall entrap, now that George won't have me."

"Whose fault is that?" asked Margaret.

"I detest him—I hate him from my heart!" exclaimed Harriet. "I would accept

Mr. Humphries, to morrow, or Sir Hawarth Fane, with all the readiness in the world. How dare he remain in this house, when I ordered him to leave it?"

"I told you what he said," replied Margaret.

"Is not Charlotte very late with my tea?" asked Harriet, in her usual manner.

"I think it is rather past the time," replied Margaret.

"The girl grows more careless every day," said Harriet. "I hope George does not make love to her."

"Oh! Harriet—impossible! a gentleman—"

"Why my dear," said Harriet drily, "such things have been done once or twice —it is a very wicked world; she has some nonsense in her head, I am sure, for she marked a whole set of handkerchiefs wrong for me the other day."

At this moment Charlotte came in with the tea-things, Harriet leaned over the tray, and surveyed the cups.

"Charlotte!" she exclaimed, "where is the cream jug?"

"Oh, dear, Miss Conway! I forgot it. I will bring it up in a minute."

"Charlotte!" exclaimed Harriet, with a tragic frown, "you are in love."

Charlotte gave a prodigious start, but she denied the charge.

"Oh! dear me, Miss Conway, how you can say so," she simpered. "It is only your fun. I thank goodness, I keep myself to myself."

"Very good," said Harriet, "I don't care how many hearts you break, only don't loose your own."

Charlotte thought this a famous joke—she tossed her head, laughed and disappeared.

But a few days after, while she was dressing her young mistress; after having committed a series of blunders, which were enough to try the patience of anybody, she stood quite still, and began to cry.

Harriet was very good-natured to her

servants; she threw herself into a chair, stifled a strong inclination to laugh, and begged to know what was the matter.

"If you would please to speak for me, Miss Conway," sobbed the agitated Charlotte.

"Speak for you? Do you mean that you wish me to give you a character. Certainly, when you leave, if you mean to leave me. I did not know you wished to go away."

Charlotte shook her head.

"What can be the matter then, Charlotte; is my Aunt Singleton displeased with you?"

Another shake, and a burst of sobbing.

"Are you ill! You had better let me give you some medicine," said Harriet, looking for the key of her medicine chest.

"Perhaps, Miss Conway, did not know that Mr. Gage was going to leave Singleton Manor."

Harriet turned pale. No she did not know it. "When was he going?"

Charlotte knew nothing about Mr.

Gage ; she only knew that his horses were to set off for Chirke Weston the day after to-morrow.

"But you are hardly crying after Mr. Gage's horses," said Harriet, making a desperate effort to rally her spirits.

"Mr. Thompson!" sobbed the damsel.

"Oh! he is the objection—what have you to say against Mr. Thompson. Mr. Gage's groom, I conclude."

Mr. Thompson had made Charlotte an offer; very respectful, and very devoted, Charlotte said he was. She confessed that Mr. Thompson was not indifferent to her, but he was so much in awe of his master, that he could not muster up courage to confess his weakness.

"But why does he not give Mr. Gage warning?" asked Harriet.

"Because," Charlotte said, "Mr. Thompson had a very good salary;" (Charlotte was always genteel in her language; she never hinted at wages,) "and it might be a very long time before he got such another situa-

wait—Mr. Gage w
man in his service
place to place.]
have every thing y
to forward your in
power, but just n
sible."

"If you would
for Henry," said Cl
in her apron.

"I do not belie
able to persuade l
man in his service,'
me I have no infl
Gage—Thompson a

"We were marri

exclaimed, "Charlotte, I am ashamed of you!" but she disliked to see people cry, and it occurred to her that it was rather a dreary method of spending one's wedding-day; so she softened down, said that she would consult with her aunt about them, and try to make the best of a bad bargain. "But I warn you," she said "that you will both lose your places, the only thing left is for us to try and find you others."

"If Miss Conway would be so good as to break the news to Mr. Gage, for Henry dared not."

"Very good," said Harriet, "I have no objection. Thompson need not be afraid that Mr. Gage would shoot him; but if he is too delicate, I will undertake it. *I* am not afraid of Mr. Gage. But how, in the name of goodness, Charlotte, did you become so intimate with Thompson. Living as you do in the housekeeper's room, where Aunt Singleton does not allow any of the men?"

For Mrs. Singleton had a peculiar custom

of having every female servant under the eye of the housekeeper, at meals, and other leisure times; while the butler presided over the men servants, both high and low, in like manner; so that they had no business together at all in that house.

Charlotte blushing very much, said that "Mr. Gage was in the habit of sending Thompson to enquire of her how Miss Conway was, three or four times a day, during her illness; in consequence of which he was always laying in wait for her, first on his master's account, and next upon his own. So that it was Mr. Gage's fault after all."

"Beg Miss Capel to come to me," said Harriet, with sparkling eyes; "and then let Mr. Gage know that I desire the favour of his company for half a minute. "But first, Mrs. Thompson, wipe your eyes if you please, or Mr. Gage will think I have been beating you."

Charlotte with a smiling face, departed upon her errand; and Harriet walked to the looking glass.

"Come, I am not so very much pulled down by my illness," said she with a smile.

Margaret came in, heard the delinquency of Charlotte with much surprise; and readily agreed to ply her worsted work in the boudoir during Mr. Gage's visit. She anticipated, with some pleasure, the scene that was about to be enacted. Harriet began to grow nervous, as he did not come directly, and turned over in her mind how she should introduce the subject—a rare occurrence with her.

At last Mr. Gage who had been found in the park, and forwarded upstairs by the butler, made his appearance, walked calmly in, shook hands with Harriet, on the strength of her absence, and "trusted that she was recovering."

"Oh, yes, quite! I am much better, I shall be able to go to the Veseys on Thursday, Mr. Gage, which is the extent of my ambition at present."

Mr. Gage rather wondered whether she

had sent for him into her own particular sitting-room to talk to him about the Veseys; but he merely remarked that he was going into Devonshire on that day, or he believed he should have joined their party, as Mrs. Vesey had been so polite as to ask him.

"Ah! so I hear," said Harriet, in a friendly tone. "How dull poor Chirke Weston will look, now they are all away."

"Dull enough," said Mr. Gage; and he sighed, thinking of his sister, and all the troubles she had gone through.

"I have not heard from Bessy, I don't know when," said Harriet.

"Nor I," said Mr. Gage. "I imagine she has not much to say."

"And writing is such a bore," said Harriet.

"A great bore," said Mr. Gage.

"I will tell you who writes a great number of letters," said Harriet. "My brother, Evan."

"And really clever ones," replied Mr. Gage.

"No! Does he ever write to you?" exclaimed Harriet.

"Now and then," said Mr. Gage. "I think he writes to Hubert more than to any of us."

The conversation had been very placid hitherto: Margaret hardly thought it could last.

There was a short pause; during which Harriet sat playing with her rings. It was such an unusual thing for Harriet to appear constrained in her manner to any one, that Mr. Gage was considerably puzzled.

Although by no means addicted to holding himself in low estimation, he did not suppose that Harriet had sent for him to make a pathetic declaration; more particularly as Margaret was present, and did not appear likely to leave the room.

"Well, Mr. Gage," said Harriet, looking up, "I heard something this morning which surprised me very much."

"Really!" said Mr. Gage, bending for-

wards; "I trust, nothing of an unpleasant nature?"

"Oh, yes! I was displeased too," said Harriet.

"Can I be of any service?" asked Mr. Gage, very civilly.

"Oh, dear me, George, no!" said Harriet, suddenly. "The thing is past mending. Your plague of a groom has been making love to my Charlotte, and married her this morning."

Mr. Gage never swore before ladies; though he had seldom felt more inclined to relieve his mind by that simple process. But after the angry pause of a minute, he ejaculated, with raised eyebrows, the words, "Highly impertinent!"

"And so ridiculous — so imprudent!" said Harriet; "how are they to live, I wonder?"

"Oh! Heaven knows how they are to live," said Mr. Gage, drawing his chair wonderfully near to Harriet; "that is their affair—not ours, you know."

"Our affair!" How odd the words sounded. Harriet blushed.

"I am so sorry about Charlotte," she said; "she does know how to dress hair!"

Mr. Gage cast an admiring glance upon Harriet's shining tresses, and added:

"I am sorry, too, to lose Thompson. He understands his business very well."

"It is very provoking. Such things are the last extent of folly," said Harriet.

"In that class, certainly;" said Mr. Gage.

"Well, but, George, what is to be done?" asked Harriet, suddenly.

Now, if she ever desired Mr. Gage to exert himself to the utmost in her service, she had only to call him George. The effect was cabalistic.

"I must get rid of Thompson, you see," he said, in a deprecating manner. "The man never could wander about with a wife and children at his heels."

"It is very odd how my maids always do marry," said Harriet. "One would think

Aunt Singleton kept them close enough. You remember, Anne?

Yes—he remembered Anne, perfectly; and it was very probable that Anne remembered him, for he had often given her a guinea to convey flowers and notes to her young lady's dressing-table, in the days of their early courtship.

"Well! two have actually married since Anne's time," said Harriet, in an injured tone; "and now Charlotte, whom I always did consider rather a plain woman; she must needs do just the same."

"It is too annoying," said Mr. Gage, examining the fringe of Harriet's beautiful shawl. "I am very sorry you should be so put out of your way."

"Shall you take Thompson away with you, on Thursday?" said Harriet, looking up in his face.

"Oh! I think I had better pay him off at once, and have done with him," said Mr. Gage.

"But I am interested for the bride and

bridegroom," said Harriet, "I want to know what they had better do."

"Thompson should get into a gentleman's family, where his wife could be lodge-keeper," said Mr. Gage.

"I'll tell you what," said Harriet, who had observed Mr. Gage's arm on the back of her chair, and whose restless spirit delighted in mischief; "I will ask that dear Mr. Humphries to look out for such a place. I am sure he will use his best endeavours; kind, good creature that he is."

"Then you have no farther commands with me," said Mr. Gage, rising directly, and preparing to leave the room.

"Not any; only you won't be very angry with poor Thompson!" said Harriet, her eyes flashing with merriment as the door closed upon Mr. Gage. "Come here to me, Margaret, and don' tshake your head at me in that way, for I will not bear it."

CHAPTER VIII.

El. Lo. Mistress, I came to see you.

Lady. That's happily dispatched—the next!

El. Lo. To take leave of you.

Lady. You need not have despaired of that, nor have used so many circumstances to win me to give you leave to perform my commands. Is there a third?

El. Lo. Yes! I had a third, had you been apt to hear it.

Lady. I? never apter—Fast, good servant, fast.

El. Lo. 'Twas to intreat you to hear Reason.

Lady. Most willingly—have you brought one can speak it?

El. Lo. Lastly, it is to kindle in that barren heart Love and Forgiveness.

THE SCORNFUL LADY.

I AM sorry you are going to-morrow," said Mr. Humphries the next morning at breakfast to Mr. Gage; "I wanted you to see my Arab."

"I will ride over this morning," said Mr. Gage, "I have nothing else to do."

"He was so sick on the passage, that they did not think he would have lived." said Mr. Humphries, turning to Margaret. "He's better now."

"Poor creature! I didn't know horses were ever sea-sick," said Margaret.

"They are wonderful animals," said Harriet, "I wish somebody would write a novel about a horse."

"You used to be so fond of horses," said Mr. Singleton.

"So I am, comparatively," said Harriet, glancing around at the gentlemen present.

Margaret had often a hard matter to preserve her gravity, but now she was vexed with Harriet, who had employed herself ever since she came down stairs in petting Mr. Humphries, on purpose to pique Mr. Gage. She offered him cream and sugar; she gave him advice about his diet; showed him the best way to eat a smelt; fussed about his toast; and took more trouble to make him comfortable, than she had ever done with anybody before.

eyes fixed upon
riet.

Harriet rose a
dishes.

" You can tel
said, " what is t
terrier. He on
never let him tou

" Oh ! I don
matter what you
phries.

" A slice of t
Harriet, " will you

Mr. Humphries
own hand, as mi
but succeed

"No, just one little bit," said Harriet stretching out the plate.

Mr. Humphries laughed awkwardly and cut it.

"You will spoil your dog, you know," he said.

During this little bit of coquetry, on her part, Mr. Gage had been increasing in rage, but she passed close to him without seeming to be aware of his presence, and left the room.

Her dog was fastened up in a small summer-room that looked into the garden, because it had a fancy for quarrelling with one of Mr. Humphries' spaniels that he had brought with him.

Harriet unfastened the little sinner, and it bounded up and down like a ball. She put the plate on a ledge under the window, and began to cut the meat into small pieces. While she was thus employed, Mr. Gage came abruptly into the room, and stood before her.

"Take care of the dog," said Harriet,

stooping down, and catching Donald by the collar; "he is apt to snap at strangers."

"Strangers!" exclaimed Mr. Gage, in great indignation. "This from you, Harriet! But you have deceived me—made me wretched long enough. It is well that all is at an end!"

Harriet stood up. To do her justice, she tried to look as grave as she could, though she had a great inclination to laugh.

"I did not give you credit, Sir, for knowing so much of your profession," she said, coolly; "you have learned, I see, that it is a better plan to attack than to defend."

"I—what have I to defend?" said Mr. Gage. "Can you deny that you long made me believe you were going to be married to Lord Raymond?"

"Really, Mr. Gage," said Harriet, "your remarks are very original; unexpected, at least. I believe, for a long time we have had as little confidential communication as any two persons in the world. People were at liberty to conjecture what they pleased

from Lord Raymond's intimacy with my family."

"People!" echoed Mr. Gage, highly offended at being thus classed with the multitude.

"Men, women and children!" said Harriet, very contentedly, and turning to the window ledge, she began to give Donald his dinner.

Mr. Gage's indignation was now at its height; but he endeavoured to veil it under an appearance of great calmness. Harriet, as cool as himself, went on mincing Donald's cold beef.

At last he said, that if it was not taxing her memory too far, he should be glad to know her motive for allowing Lord Raymond to be recognized as her lover; had she preferred Lord Raymond, he should have respected the feeling, although he should not, certainly, have thought very highly of her taste.

"As that preference has been entirely a little fancy of your own," said Harriet,

with spirit; "I think it not worth while to defend my taste on an imaginary point."

"Still," said Mr. Gage, "you suffered me to remain in error on a subject which you well knew to be of great importance to my happiness."

"As I am not appointed guardian to your happiness, Mr. Gage," said Harriet, with mock civility, "I do not feel any remorse upon that point. If you chose to compliment my taste, by inventing an attachment between me and a remarkably attractive man, I will take this opportunity, if you please, of returning you my best thanks."

Mr. Gage looked still more stormy, but he seemed determined, in popular phrase, to "have his say out."

"You never were attached to Lord Raymond then?" he said.

"Never, as it happened," returned Harriet, with great indifference.

"Then why give me to understand—" Mr. Gage began.

"Stop there!" said Harriet, "don't ring the changes, my good friend, upon your misapprehension. I was not likely to tell *you*, of all people, my family secrets. Lord Raymond was always on an intimate footing with me. I could not remove the confusion in his affairs, nor help his mother dying at the wrong time: and these were the only things that prevented his marriage with Lucy from taking place earlier."

"You knew when I was at Chirke Weston," said Mr. Gage, "that my feelings towards you had undergone no change, and yet you not only suffered me to be in an error, but you encouraged my belief that you were engaged to that man to the utmost of your power."

"Well," said Harriet, "I am not going to tell any lies. Perhaps, I did. I was rather amused to see you making a blunder."

"You confess it," said Mr. Gage; "and now you are acting the same part with that wretched idiot, Humphries; though you still

see that I cannot forget you, as I wish to Heaven I could."

"Poor dear Mr. Humphries!" said Harriet, leaning against the window, and, throwing the pieces of meat slowly to her dog, "he is to be called an idiot, because I am commonly civil to my uncle's guests."

"I suppose I am not to be considered as your uncle's guest?" said Mr. Gage.

"Not when you behave so ill," returned Harriet.

"I—what have I done?" asked Mr. Gage.

"Recollect the ball, Sir!" said Harriet; "remember how you tricked me into dancing with you."

Mr. Gage smiled a little. "Allow that you brought it on yourself," said he. "You *could* not dance with Sir Hawarth."

"Could not?" asked Harriet. "I imagine I have every right to please myself in such things. Besides, you have been very rude to me ever since you came; and did not leave the house when I desired you."

"You know that it was impossible," said

Mr. Gage; "besides, I gave you my reasons for not obeying you."

"I did not want any reasons," said Harriet.

"I believe you," said Mr. Gage; "but Miss Capel was evidently on my side then, as well as at the ball. I wish you would speak to her on the subject. I never met any woman with more delicacy of feeling."

"It is a pity you don't marry her, then, if you think so highly of her;" said Harriet, perversely.

"I did not come here to marry Miss Capel, but to marry you," replied Mr. Gage, coldly.

The deepest carmine colour flew into Harriet's face, but she still remained pelting her dog with the little pieces of meat. Mr. Gage stood waiting to hear what she would say.

"Ah! but George, do you mean it?" said Harriet, looking up archly in his face.

"Do I mean it?" asked Mr. Gage;

" when I give you the power of rejecting my hand again."

This was so characteristic of the degree of estimation in which Mr. Gage held himself, that Harriet burst into a prolonged peal of laughter.

" Well, then, George," said she, holding out her hand.

" Well, then, Harriet," he replied, clasping it.

" But I tell you what," said Harriet, as she was leaving the room, " you may go and make your own story good to my Uncle Singleton, for if you think I shall take all that trouble, you will find yourself very much mistaken."

The next report current in the house was that Mr. Gage's horses were not going to Chirke Weston; and the presumption, therefore, was, that their master had determined to prolong his stay at Singleton Manor.

CHAPTER IX.

Prin. We are wise girls to mock our lovers so,

* * * * *

So, portent-like, would I o'ersway his state
That he should be my fool, and I his fate.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

"You are not going away on Saturday," said Harriet the next morning to Margaret, who was sitting with a letter in her hand, "do not think it. I have made up my mind that you spend Christmas here."

"Rather hard upon Miss Capel," said Mr. Gage, "considering that *you* will not be here at Christmas."

"Well, I don't know where I am likely to be, if not here," said Harriet; "I think there is some derangement in that family," she added, indicating Mr. Gage by a movement of her head:—"He is like the man

in 'Nicholas Nickleby,' he insists upon marrying people, and I am his present object; it will go off, you know. Your turn will come next, Margaret, my dear."

"You are so provoking, Harriet," said Margaret, trying in vain to look grave.

"But why should you go back to this Mrs. Fitzpatrick?" said Harriet.

"Because she is so lonely, Harriet. I told you she had lost her daughter; and I have already been here a long time."

"But supposing we are both foolish enough to keep in the same mind, and marry on the 18th, I shall want you to be bridesmaid," said Harriet.

"I would, gladly," said Margaret, "but I know Mrs. Fitzpatrick really wants me; and I decide in her favour, because you are happy and well, and she is so desolate alone."

"It would give us both so much pleasure if you could stay," said Mr. Gage lowering his newspaper.

"I wonder who he includes so familiarly

with himself," said Harriet, "I think it must be Thompson; he is very intimate with his groom. Won't you stay to oblige Thompson?"

Margaret laughing, protested "that she really could not."

Mr. Gage wondered how Harriet could be so ridiculous.

"Thompson and Charlotte are forgiven for the present," said Harriet. "I wondered what made George so very lenient; it seems that he had it in view to commit a similar folly, and that reminds me I must learn to smoke again."

"Oh! do not, Harriet."

"My dear, it is in self-defence; unless, indeed, I break off the match. He lives in a barrack. I dare say his room is not half the size of my uncle's kennel: there he sits with all his intimate friends, smoking till the place is like a lime kiln; if I cannot join them, what is to become of me? Mr. Gage, have you a cigar about you? I will lose no time in learning the art again."

Mr. Gage not noticing the last part of the speech, said " he did not suppose it to be a very likely thing that he should permit his wife to live in a barrack."

" Ah!" said Harriet shaking her head, " I have a conviction, a presentiment, that I shall live in the little lime-kiln we were speaking of. Uncle Singleton always said that would be my fate. And if it was not for the bracelet-watch which George is having made for me, I assure you it weighs so heavily on my spirits, that I would never speak to him again. Just look behind the newspaper, my dear, and see if he is crying."

Mr. Gage dropped the newspaper, and laughed without restraint, but he told Harriet that " she had now effectually frightened Miss Capel from ever coming to see her, when she was settled."

" Oh! I have provided against that;" said Harriet, " I don't know at all what Mr. Gage's plans are; but for myself, I mean to go to Wardenscourt early in the

summer. Now I must have you solemnly promise, that directly I summon you, you will instantly join me there. You know Mrs. Fitzpatrick is connected with Lord Raymond, so that if she is invited, I suppose she will make no scruple of accepting; then we will really enjoy ourselves."

"I should like it very much," said Margaret.

"And you promise?"

"Yes, I do, indeed."

Margaret's approaching departure was a source of regret to every one. Harriet told her that they looked upon her as a kind of hostage for her own good behaviour, and that she had some ideas of the same kind herself. She was sure that she should do something outrageous when she was deprived of Margaret's overlooking eye. That neither she, nor Mr. Gage had at all made up their minds, and that she knew there would be a violent quarrel as soon as Margaret was out of the house.

Margaret thought, and said that if Mr. Gage meant to quarrel he would have begun already, for there was not a single means of aggravation that Harriet had left untried ever since her engagement with him.

Sometimes she affected to consider the engagement as a delusion of his own; sometimes she told Margaret that they had agreed to feign it as long as he stayed at Singleton Manor, in order to amuse him; at other times, she said, it was all very well while the fancy lasted, but that George would change his mind in a day or two, and so save her the trouble of formerly breaking it off.

Mr. Gage took refuge in the newspaper from all these attacks, and did not seem to think it worth while to be ruffled. Mr. Humphries was constantly at the house during the few last days of Margaret's stay. He looked very sorrowful, but his attempts to propitiate her were confined to a variety of strange faces, and gestures, which to say

the truth, she was too much occupied to remark. None regretted her so much as Mrs. Singleton; she had been so attentive to all her wants, and so skilful in making the old lady hear, that she felt in losing Margaret that she was parting with a luxury she could ill afford to do without.

Mason shed some silent tears when she received her orders to pack up. Whether they were on her own, or her young lady's account, she did not explain. She did say while she was packing the trinket-box, that a very general notion had prevailed in the housekeeper's room, that Ixworth—Mr. Humphries' place of residence—was shortly to have a mistress; and she believed it was never supposed likely that Miss Conway would be requested to fill that situation; not, she wished to observe, that any opinion prevailed derogatory to Miss Conway's charms, as might be proved by the circumstance that Mr. Gage had made her an offer—a very difficult and very high gentleman—but she had never heard any

harm of Mr. Humphries, and no one in the whole country, she believed, could say anything to his disadvantage, which she thought a great thing in favour of a young gentleman with so many clear thousands a-year. That Mr. Humphries' gentleman had remarked, the night that they had all made a party to go to the play at T——, that Mr. Humphries seemed to him to be rather low; and that the butler, who was considered literary, had observed, that "the course of true love never did run smooth;" that the company had not taken the liberty to mention any names, but that she could not deny that several of the party had looked as if they knew the cause of Mr. Humphries' lowness, and of the butler's quotation.

Harriet actually cried when it came to taking leave of Margaret, and between her sobs, affected to be very angry with Mr. Gage that he did not follow her example.

Mr. Gage made a polite speech, of course, and felt it too, which is not the case, with all polite speeches.

Margaret renewed her promise of going to Wardenscourt, twice in the library, and once at the hall door, whither her warm-hearted friend followed her; and then the carriage started from the door.

"Ah! there is poor Mr. Humphries," said Mason, as they swept out of the shrubberies.

Margaret looked up, and beheld the gentleman in question, leaning on a gate with his handkerchief in his hand. There was no time for a bow, so she passed him without his having the comfort of knowing that she had seen him.

They arrived late in the evening at Mrs. Fitzpatrick's. The musical dash of the sea, and the scent of the air, warned Margaret their near approach to home.

Her friend was delighted to receive her back. She had felt her absence more than she had cared to acknowledge in her letters, for fear of interfering with the pleasure of her visit.

Each had much to tell the other, though

of a very different kind; and Margaret had several times to repeat the fact that she came back single-hearted. So strange did it seem to Mrs. Fitzpatrick, that her faultless beauty should not have been successfully sought before this.

A slight discrepancy between Mason's and Miss Capel's account made Mrs. Fitzpatrick rather suspicious, and many weeks elapsed, before she could give up the idea that a certain Mr. Humphries was likely to make his appearance at her cottage to conclude the preliminaries already entered into, of a marriage between himself and her beautiful guest.

Meanwhile, Margaret was busy ordering a handsome, gold Châtelaine, or Equipage, for Harriet; she drew the pattern, she corresponded almost daily with the jeweller; she knew no rest until it was finished according to her wish.

It so happened that Harriet had not seen one of these useful toys. It arrived the day before her marriage, and she was delighted beyond

measure. In a few days, Margaret received a letter thanking her a thousand times for her beautiful gift, and saying that she had deferred writing till she could inform her that she was actually married, a circumstance of which she had entertained great doubts until she found herself at the church-door, when she supposed that even Mr. Gage could not well retract. That she begged Margaret to notice that a blot on the paper was of his making; that they were going leisurely through Wales, previous to embarking for Dublin, and that it was with the sincerest regret that she found herself obliged to sign her letters "Harriet Gage."

Still the cloud
Unwelcome pa
Shall not time

TIME sped o
as it had done
spring came s
believed; the
lowed. She wa
ling by the sea-
visiting the poc
from Elizabeth,
through the Itali

come at once to Wardenscourt. That her father inclined to this plan, and that for herself "all places were alike to her." This was the only intimation she gave that her loss still preyed upon her mind. "If she decided upon this plan," she added, "she hoped to have Margaret to meet her." A letter from Harriet followed this, very shortly. She stated that she had arrived at Wardenscourt three days ago, that Lady Raymond had written by the same post an invitation to Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and that both that lady and Margaret were expected at Wardenscourt in three days' time. She said that Captain Gage and his daughter were on their road home, and that Bessy counted upon meeting Margaret when she came to England.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick was well contented to go. Margaret could not refuse. Her heart sank, now that the time came, when she thought that Mr. Haveloc's estate was at no great distance from Wardenscourt; and that if he were not abroad, she might

possibly be exposed to the chance of meeting him. When Harriet talked of her visit as a distant thing, she had fancied she could have borne it very well. Of course this agreeable prospect was kept to herself, and she tried to express a good deal of pleasure at the idea of the journey. They performed it in one day; there was no hardship in early rising those fine summer mornings, and it was not six o'clock when they arrived at Wardenscourt. The grounds were spacious and highly cultivated; the house rather too new for Margaret's taste. In front, there was a white portico built in with the house, and filled with plants; on the other side, a long verandah, the floor of which was raised by a flight of steps to a level with the drawing-room windows. Lady Raymond was in this verandah among her plants, and with her, a bold-eyed woman, who stared hard at the new comers, and then flung herself out of the verandah and into the shrubberies, much as if they had been lepers. "My friend, Lady James

Deacon;" said Lucy, after she had welcomed them, "the sweetest woman—when you know her."

Margaret thought it almost a pity she was so careful to hide the sweetness she might possess; and she thought, with a smile, of the caustic remarks that Harriet would be likely to make upon her manner.

"Harriet is out riding with Mr. Gage," said Lucy turning to Margaret, "do wait here till she comes in; she will be so delighted to see you. But for you, dear Mrs. Fitzpatrick," she said, again taking her hand, "I should recommend, do you know, an hour's complete rest, before you dress for dinner."

Mrs. Fitzpatrick thought her advice very kind and excellent, and went up to her room. Margaret remained with Lady Raymond. In a few minutes, Harriet and Mr. Gage rode up to the steps. Harriet dismounted hastily, and ran up into the verandah.

"She is looking very well, is she not?" said Lucy.

She looked brilliant, in perfect health, excited by exercise, the red and white of her fine complexion more intense; the dark hue of her chesnut hair, defining the oval contour of her forehead and cheeks. She sprang forward to greet Margaret, as warmly affectionate as ever.

"And you, ma mie—I wish I could say every thing I want at once. Lucy, love, the Sedleys were not at home; I say, George. Well, if he is not looking at the chesnut's fore foot! I never knew such a fidget about horses. George! how polite you are to Miss Capel."

"Miss Capel!" said Mr. Gage, coming up quickly into the verandah, "I am heartily glad to see you again."

His manner was so much more blunt and frank than before—he reminded her so strongly of Captain Gage, that she was quite astonished.

"Ah, how I have improved him!"

said Harriet, who had been watching Margaret's countenance.

Mr. Gage laughed, and told Harriet that she had nearly lamed her chestnut, and might be satisfied with her morning's work.

Harriet took off her hat, and sat down with her back to him, saying, that what she had marred, he might mend; he was good for nothing else.

Her voice, her face, so full of happiness, contradicted her words.

Mr. Gage went out to look after the horses, which were equally beloved by both of them.

Lady Raymond, coming up to her sister, stood arranging her hair, which was slightly ruffled by her hat.

"Well, Mrs. Gage, you took your time this morning," she said; "you find Mr. Gage's company very agreeable, I conclude; since you certainly give me but little of yours. Always, I assure you, my dear Miss Capel, rambling about with Mr. Gage."

Margaret smiled at Harriet, who looked half bashful, half mischievous.

"It is very well it has turned out so tolerably," said she; "because I always tell George that you had a great hand in bringing things about."

"But you are quite happy, Harriet?"

"Yes; pretty comfortable. George really did take a house for me — a very pretty house. So that when he is obliged to leave Dublin, I shall let him go, and remain behind; for I like the society very much."

"How independently she talks," said Lucy, laughing.

"George has so many faults," pursued Harriet; "I fancy sometimes he must be jealous. If you knew the trouble I had to get any of his brother officers introduced to me. I only know two—such sweet young men! One of them plays the cornopæon admirably, and the other makes the most excellent toffy."

"Might I ask what toffy is?" enquired Margaret.

"It is made, my love, by boiling treacle and sugar," replied Harriet.

"Oh, and lemon-peel!" said Lady Raymond.

"No; almonds," replied Harriet; "that was the way we made it one morning when George was gone to a steeple-chase; and when he came back he could not think what made everything so sticky. That is the only objection to the compounding of toffy. You still like, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Margaret?" she said, turning to her with much softness of expression.

"Very much! I am truly attached to her," replied Margaret.

"I am glad of it. No doubt she is a delightful person," said Harriet. "But you are not going to be an old maid. I have my wits about me; and I will take any bet that any body pleases to offer, you don't go back single. Everard Gage comes here this very day, does not he, Lucy?"

"Yes; but Everard—" said Lady Raymond.

"I know he will be as hard to rouse as

a polar bear," said Harriet; "but I pique myself on doing wonders."

"But pray, Harriet, not for me," said Margaret. "Do not disturb Mr. Everard's tranquillity on my account."

"The best match decidedly about this neighbourhood is Mr. Haveloc, of Tynebrook," said Lady Raymond, laughing. "I strongly recommend him to Miss Capel's notice; and though he is at present in London, he is soon expected to return. Lord Raymond likes him extremely."

"Didn't I meet him at Chirke Weston, Margaret?" asked Harriet.

"I think you did," replied Margaret.

"Ay! you were too young then, or else it was really such neglect on your part—staying in the very house," said Harriet. "You will have it all to begin again."

This was very pleasant, certainly, to have two kind friends planning to throw Margaret and Mr. Haveloc together as much as possible.

Margaret faintly entreated that Harriet

would make no matches for her; that she preferred remaining single, and, that strange as the fancy was, she begged to be indulged in it.

"But about Mr. Haveloc," said Lady Raymond, drawing her chair close into the window. "As Mrs. Fitzpatrick is up stairs, I will tell you such a romantic story about him. You know Mrs. Fitzpatrick had a very lovely daughter. Well; Mr. Haveloc was devotedly attached to her; it was all settled—they were going to be married, when she fell into a rapid decline, and died. Raymond saw him there, and said—" Here Lady Raymond expressed Lord Raymond's sayings by lifting up her hands and eyes, and dropping them both together; "and I think that it was which made Mr. Haveloc rather religious."

"Is he religious?" asked Harriet, pulling the leaves carelessly from a geranium.

"Oh, I think so!" returned Lady Raymond, "he has been building schools on his estate; and is wild now about repairing

a church—to be sure it is the family church, where all the old monuments are—the Crusaders, and even the Danish sea-king, they say. Harriet, remind me that we take Miss Capel to see the church at Tynebrook to-morrow, if it is fine. He has been laying down a tessellated pavement, and putting in stained-glass windows, and such an altar cloth! I am told there was never anything so beautiful; but I have not been yet, because it is a bad carriage road, except in summer."

"Well, what an odd fancy," said Harriet, winding her riding whip round her fingers. "I always thought he was a moonshiny sort of a person. I suppose he was engrossed by Miss Fitzpatrick when I saw him. You know people gave him to Bessy about that time."

"So I remember; it was the first thing almost that I heard of him," said Margaret.

"Shall we dress, pet?" asked Harriet, fondly passing her arm round Margaret's

waist;" we can come down and have a gossip before the people collect for dinner."

Margaret assented, and Harriet left the room with Lady Raymond.

Margaret stood for a few minutes leaning against the window, trying to compose herself, or to appear composed. "Shall I never be wise or womanly?" she asked herself, "shall I never bear to hear his name mentioned without such a pang as I now feel? Is this, as one sometimes reads, to embitter my whole life—this wretched mistake? It is too severe a penalty for my folly! How can I meet him calmly, if I am thus agitated by the very narrative of circumstances that I have long known, and long made up my mind to forget?"

But as thinking did not seem likely to make matters better, Margaret roused herself, and went up stairs to dress. She was quite startled to find Mrs. Fitzpatrick in her room, in her black velvet, ready for dinner.

"I am late—am I not?" said she,

coming up to her chair, and taking her hand.

"Not early, my dear, but you will find time enough, you are always so rapid."

Mason set to work directly; Mrs. Fitzpatrick sat beside the toilet, talking.

At last, Margaret, who had scarcely replied, turned her head round, and said, "How long do we stay here?"

"How long, my dear? Why, we have but just arrived," said her friend with a smile.

"True," said Margaret, "there is no reason,—only I do not feel very well."

"The journey, perhaps," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, kindly, "we must see what a night's rest will do for you; but do not talk of going away, for I have made up my mind that you enjoy yourself very much."

Margaret smiled sadly, and accompanied her friend into the drawing-room. It was already lighted up, and the scented air of the warm summer evening, struggled in through the closed curtains. The guests were standing and sitting in groups, talking

and laughing. Lord Raymond on the hearth-rug.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Margaret were presented to him, and he received them with kindness.

"You remember Miss Capel, at Chirke Weston, my dear, don't you," said Lucy.

Lord Raymond did not—but he said he did, and asked her, "if she left all her friends well in that part of the world."

Harriet came close to Lord Raymond, and whispered something in his ear, which made him laugh; and then seizing hold of Margaret, she exclaimed to some one reclining almost at full length in an easy chair: "Everard—wake up! this is Miss Capel!"

Margaret blushed crimson; the person addressed, who appeared to be in the last stage of exhaustion, forced himself into a sitting posture, smiled favourably on Margaret without speaking, stared; and sank back again.

"What a wretch he is," said Harriet, standing quite close to him while she made her remarks, "does he not look like a

great wax doll, perfectly well dressed." He ought to be tired, because he came a good many miles by railroad to day, and as much as seven or eight more in a post-chaise from the terminus. Miss Capel has travelled farther than you to-day, Everard."

"Ah!" said the person appealed to. At that moment, he was directed to take Miss Capel to dinner, which great exertion he underwent. Harriet, on the other side, allowed him but little peace. She contrived to make the most provoking demands on his memory and his descriptive powers, neither of which were particularly vivid. She would ask how far it was from Halifax to Quebec? What the falls of Niagara looked like? How many miles an hour one could go in a sledge? All these questions were easily despatched by the words: I don't know—I can't tell—I forget. And then a slight pause, while Harriet ate her dinner; but as she ate little, and talked much, her attacks soon began again.

"I say, Everard, are the ladies pretty over in Canada?"

" Some of them."

" But now, answer me on your word of honour, have they not red noses ?"

A laugh.

" How do you think George is looking ?"

" Oh ! very well."

" What a touching thing it was to see you two meet."

" Did you think so ?"

" Margaret, just fancy two brothers who had not seen each other for three years, George comes into the room with his mouth full of something about my chestnut, and seeing Everard in the arm-chair, asleep, says : ' Ah ! Everard, you there !' Upon which my friend to the right, answers : ' Eh ! George how are you ?' I shed tears. Two horses, I need not say, would have been more affectionate."

" I am sure I kissed *you*," said Everard, anxious to defend himself.

There was a general laugh.

" Of course," said Harriet, quickly recovering from her confusion, " very proper

to a sister. Lord James, I shall call you to order."

Lord James, who looked as bold as his wife, which was saying a great deal for him, was stopped in the act of launching some witticism on the public, and contented himself with laughing longer and louder than any body else.

"How do you like Everard? Don't you think him very handsome?" inquired Harriet as soon as the ladies left the dining-room, "he is considered the best looking of the Gages."

Margaret smiled at Harriet's eagerness to provide for her, but begged again with genuine earnestness to be left to her fate.

Lady James Deacon came up to them, was named to Margaret, and became gracious in her manner. She showed her a new species of knitting, and on Mrs. Fitzpatrick standing by to learn it, she transferred her instructions to her with great good humour. She rallied Harriet, in the pauses, upon her handsome brother-in-law, and alluded to some other conquest, which

she had heard Mrs. Gage had made in Dublin."

Margaret felt and looked pained; she disliked all jests upon what she could not help considering as sacred subjects; and she thought a wife's vows too important to become the object of such light discourse. She looked uneasily at Harriet, who stood laughing at all Lady James chose to say, or hint. Mrs. Gage saw this in a moment, and with her usual abruptness, she drew Margaret out upon the terrace.

"Look you, little Oracle," said she, "I am not used to do anything by halves; I love my husband a great deal more than he deserves; but I am not going to pull long faces every time a woman of that sort makes a jest upon me. She could not understand me if I did. She has no delicacy herself, and does not know when to give other people credit for it. So now come back, and see what you can make of Everard. Captain Gage gives them all a very liberal allowance."

CHAPTER XI.

Theo. To this man, my fortune,
My more than purblind fortune, gave my faith,
Drawn to it by as many shows of service
And signs of truth, as ever false tongue uttered:
Heaven pardon all.

LOVE'S PILGRIMAGE.

THERE was no public breakfast at Wardenscourt. People took that meal in their several rooms. Margaret was just giving Mason her simple directions, when in swam Mrs. Thompson, with Mrs. Gage's compliments, and "would Miss Capel breakfast with her in the Oratory?"

Miss Capel was pleased to renew her acquaintance with Mrs. Thompson, who rustled about in a smarter silk, and finer cap then ever was seen before. She accepted the invitation, and sent the lady's-maid on to say so.

The Oratory was a little octagon room, adjoining Harriet's bed-room, which she used as a boudoir. She could not help smiling at her friend's pertinacity; for there, reclining on a sofa, was Everard Gage, while Harriet looked triumphant from behind the urn. Mr. Gage was reading the paper by the window.

"Come, Margaret, lose no time," said Harriet, with a distinct glance at Everard.

Margaret took her speech literally, glided into a chair, and drew her plate towards her. Mr. Gage came to help her.

"Everard!" said Harriet, "have you found the head we all think so like Miss Capel?"

"No," said he, looking up from the 'Book of Beauty,' which he was turning over; "there is nothing here pretty enough."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Harriet; "we shall do."

"Where do you think of going to-day?" said Mr. Gage to Margaret.

She could not bring herself to mention the church at Tynebrook, but Harriet saved her the trouble.

"Lucy thought of going to see Mr. Haveloc's new church," said Harriet. "I don't know whether it is settled, because if he is out, we shall have to find the beadle, or the sexton, or somebody, to show it us. But, to be sure, we can take Everard with us, to run about and find the proper people. I wonder when *you* will grow good enough to build churches, Everard?"

"I don't know. I must grow rich enough first," he said.

Mr. Gage did not despise Mr. Haveloc for this fancy; he only pitied him. If he had spent so much that he had not enough left to buy a proper number of horses and carriages, then it would have been something to despise. But, as he had not deprived himself of any luxuries in the prosecution of his whim, he contented himself with the softer emotion of pity.

"I suppose we shall not have you with us, George," said Harriet.

"No."

Mr. Gage confessed he saw nothing very attractive in a damp country church, full of workmen. And he happened to be engaged to go somewhere with the Deacons.

"And you, Everard?"

"No." The day was so hot, he thought he should stay at home.

Harriet looked for a moment undecided whether she should permit this act of rebellion to pass unnoticed; but seeing Margaret about to leave the room, she joined her, and they went down stairs together.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick declined being of the party to the church. She would wait till Mr. Haveloc returned from town; and then he should be her cicerone. She was not so very fond of architecture for its own sake—but Margaret was. She had no doubt the expedition would delight Margaret.

So they set off—Lady Raymond, Harriet and Margaret—through a most beautiful country, and a great many steep, uneven, narrow roads. At last, the church, low in

a valley, and buried among old trees, came in sight.

" I never was so glad to see a steeple before," said Harriet. " Why it is twelve miles off! I am knocked up, and so are you, child. How pale you look!"

A low, heavy oaken gate admitted them into the church-yard. They left the carriage without, and stood looking at the building. It was a beautiful church. The pencil of Cattermole might almost weary in recording the elaborate carving of the stonework about the windows, and the deep porch. The doors were open, for the workmen were about some of the pillars and scaffolds; and tools still announced their occupation within.

The organ was pealing, and the rich sound swelled into the quiet church-yard.

" They have a blind organist here," said Lucy. " He plays admirably. Listen—Mozart's mass in C."

" Beautiful! how fine the Gloria sounds," said Harriet. " What a movement!"

"I wish the Protestant Church was musical," said Lucy, as they walked up the aisle.

"Is that you, Lady Raymond?" asked the player, coming to the front of the gallery. It was Mr. Haveloc.

Margaret's start—the mist that rushed before her eyes, were unobserved by her companions.

Lucy went on. "We were praising your playing so much, Mr. Haveloc. We thought it was your organist."

"I will come down to you," he said, and disappearing from the gallery, he joined them in the aisle.

"So, you have found your way here at last, Lady Raymond," he said as he shook hands with her. "Confess that the road was very tolerable, after all."

"Bearable," said Lucy. "Mrs. Gage and Miss Capel are behind."

He advanced to Harriet, bowed to Margaret in passing, and went on speaking to Harriet.

"And you did not come on horseback, Mrs. Gage? I thought from Lady Raymond's account, you were never out of the saddle."

"It is so very warm to-day," said Harriet, "how nice and cool the church feels. But, how very odd! What a mint of money this must have cost!"

"Aye. But one never cares what one spends upon a fancy. I am not so satisfied with the bills my gardener brings me in for plants. I dare say, now, you did not grudge what you gave for your favourite horse."

"My chesnut was a present from Uncle Singleton," said Harriet, "but it is shocking to think what he cost."

"I always think it very extravagant to spend much upon horses," said Lady Raymond, "they are such uncertain things. They fall lame, or die; or, something—"

"Not more uncertain than Blenheim spaniels," said Harriet, laughing.

"Ah! true, Lady Raymond; recollect the

fifty guineas for Flora," said Mr. Haveloc.

"You certainly saved her life that day," said Lucy. "Raymond did not know what on earth to do for her, poor little love!"

"You will stand up for the cold water cure after that," said Mr. Haveloc.

"I shall, indeed," said Lady Raymond, "I sing your praises every where."

"But I am dying to see the tomb of the Danish sea-king," said Harriet. "Where is it?"

"It was in the chancel," Mr. Haveloc said. "He would show them the way."

Margaret gathered from this trifling conversation, on what an intimate footing he was at Wardenscourt. She felt sick to death. She never lifted her eyes from the pavement, and scarcely knew where she was going, nor what her companions were talking about. She was occupied with one feeling, that he must think it strange and indelicate that she was of the party, and that she wished some one would tell him that they believed him to be in London.

But they were too much engrossed with the strange old tomb.

"This granite chest—look, Lucy! how curious!" exclaimed Harriet. "And what a sword—immense! can you lift it, Mr. Haveloc?"

He raised it a little off the lid.

"It is chained down, you see," he said, "because it was once stolen. And my ancestor had more trouble than it was worth in getting it back again."

"What time was that?" asked Lady Raymond.

"In the reign of William the Third," he replied.

"Has this tomb ever been opened?" asked Harriet.

"Yes. In my father's time."

"And what did they find within?"

"A good deal of armour, and a few bones."

"Delightful! If I were you, Mr. Haveloc, I would make a point of being buried in it myself," said Harriet, laughing. Those persons who think little of pre-

paring for death, are always the most cheerful and ready in talking about it.

"I would not intrude upon him," said Mr. Haveloc. "I should be very scrupulous of usurping the last home of any man."

"Oh! you are quite a saint, I hear, Mr. Haveloc," said Harriet, gaily.

"Very good hearing," said Mr. Haveloc; "but, saint, or not, I have no idea of squeezing into this tomb along with the old Dane!"

Margaret, feeling more and more sick and faint, held by the altar rail while they were talking. His neglect of herself; his easy intimacy with the others, struck her to the heart. She had no reason to expect that he would meet her with any emotion, but still this coldness, all the keener from being perfectly unstudied, affected her more than she could have anticipated.

Now, the fact was, he had not recognised her; being extremely near-sighted, and not at all expecting to see her, he had imagined

Lady Raymond had said "Miss Campbell," when she named Margaret; a young lady whom he had met at her house, but of whose person he had not a more distinct idea than of that of the Empress of China.

The first thing that started her from her reverie, was a laugh from Mr. Haveloc.

"Look at Mrs. Gage, with all those orange and green panes upon her face," he exclaimed.

Lucy laughed heartily; Harriet started on one side: "Do go back again, Harriet," she cried; "you have no idea how droll it looked."

"Thank you; take your turn, if you please," said Harriet.

"How vain she is!" cried Lucy; "do you stand there, Mr. Haveloc?"

He complied with her request; and both sisters were extremely amused by the effect produced. Any trifle would serve to set them laughing; they were always in high spirits.

"Oh! but we have not seen the altar-cloth," said Lucy, recovering herself.

It was covered with brown Holland, and Mr. Haveloc went to the rail, where Margaret was standing, to go up to the altar and take off the cover.

"Permit me," he said politely to Margaret, as he passed her.

The tears rushed to her eyes, but she bravely forced them back, and tried to still her agitation.

"Good gracious!" said Harriet, far more struck with this finery, than the exquisite architecture of the church; "where did you get this beautiful work?"

"At Bruges," he replied.

"Oh, Heavens! done by Roman Catholic fingers. How horribly wicked you are—and yet it is so exquisite, that I really—"

"What day will you dine with us, Mr. Haveloc?" said Lucy, leaning over the rail.

"Whenever you please to command me, Lady Raymond," he replied.

"Raymond would be so pleased if we brought you back with us; he thinks you still in town," said Lady Raymond.

Poor Margaret! the idea of driving back with him in the same carriage.

"I cannot make it out to-day, I have so many things to do," he said.

"You will like to come," said Harriet, "because Everard is staying with us, and you knew all the Gages, did you not?"

"*You* are staying there, Mrs. Gage, is not that sufficient?"

"Oh, if I was but single," exclaimed Harriet, who never hesitated saying what was uppermost in her mind, "how I would try to catch you!"

"Why did you never do me that honour when you had it in your power, Mrs. Gage?" said Mr. Haveloc, laughing.

"Because, Mr. Haveloc, I had not then seen your altar-cloth."

"Your sister uses me very ill," said he, turning to Lady Raymond; "she would have me believe that all my merits lie in that altar-cloth.'

"What did it cost, Mr. Haveloc?" said Harriet.

"Will you confess to the cost of your chestnut, if I tell you?"

"Agreed."

"Three hundred guineas."

"You don't say so!"

"And the chestnut?"

"The very sum."

"But my cloth will outlast your horse."

"Well, I allow that," said Harriet; "but it does not follow that you are the less extravagant of the two."

"You are both horridly extravagant," said Lucy, "but say when you will dine with us."

"Mr. Haveloc," said Harriet, beckoning him close to her, "another attraction, Mrs. Fitzpatrick is with us."

His agitation quite satisfied Harriet; he started, coloured, tried to speak very calmly, and turned to Lady Raymond.

"Will your ladyship allow me to say to-morrow?"

"By all means," she said, "if you cannot really come to-day."

"I wish I could," he replied.

Another confirmation for Margaret, if she had needed it. The whole chancel seemed swimming round.

She asked Harriet in a low voice if she knew how late it was.

"No, ma mie, enlighten me," said Harriet.

Margaret showed her watch.

"The fact is, you are quite tired child," said Harriet, looking attentively at her face.

"Quite—the heat—" faltered Margaret.

"Then we will go at once," said Mrs. Gage with her usual decision.

Mr. Haveloc was trying to persuade Lady Raymond to go on to Tynebrook, to see some Vandykes, and taste some particular black grapes.

Lucy was hesitating.

"No, no, no!" said Harriet, coming between them, "you will be late, I tell you; and you know that half a hundred formal people are coming to dinner. You will get into sad disgrace."

Lucy decided at once to go home, and Mr. Haveloc gave her his arm, and walked with them through the church-yard to the carriage.

"Mr. Haveloc," said Harriet, "we are going to act a French vaudeville; the parts are not all filled. Will you take one?"

"I regret that my genius does not lie that way;" he said, "what is the play?"

"'La Demoiselle à marier.' Lucy is too idle to act—her forte is in tableaux. I am going to be the mother; Lord James Deacon, the friend; the father is to be forthcoming when we want him, and as Lady James won't take the lover, which is a shame, for she has an excellent figure for it; I don't very well see how you can be off—"

"I should put you out. I have no turn for the stage; and, besides, I am not familiar with French," he said, "if it had been Italian now—"

"Oh! you speak it as well as we do, I dare say," said Lucy, "you had better take it, I think."

"We will talk it over to-morrow," said Harriet as he put her into the carriage.

"And who plays the 'Demoiselle à marier?'" he asked.

"We want to persuade Miss Campbell," said Lucy, "because she sings well, and speaks French beautifully; better, I believe than any Englishwoman ever did."

"Ah!" said Mr. Haveloc, turning with a smile to Margaret, "and are you so very difficult then to persuade?"

He was handing her into the carriage as he spoke; as she seated herself her face was directly before him, pale as a marble statue—dim—reproachful.

"Spectre-smitten!" said Harriet as the carriage swept away, "what was the matter, Margaret?"

"The—matter—" said Margaret, speaking with difficulty.

"I am sure we will not let him off acting, after that start," continued Harriet. "Hamlet is nothing to him. I wonder which of us is so very horribly ugly," she continued, laughing, "depend upon it, the man has murdered somebody in his day."

"Harriet! what horrid ideas you have," said Lucy, leaning back very comfortably, "the notion of poor Mr. Haveloc having murdered any one. Don't you think, Miss Capel, it is a beautiful church?"

"Very," said Margaret.

"She has a head-ache; don't talk to her," said Harriet, decidedly.

Lady Raymond was shocked and concerned; and offered Margaret her vinaigrette and her Eau de Cologne, and reproached herself for undertaking so long a drive in the heat.

Margaret tried to smile and thank her, and by the use of the flaçon to still the trembling of her nerves.

"Oh! I see, Margaret," said Harriet, suddenly, "he took you for Miss Campbell, and when he was putting you into the carriage he found his mistake; that made him look so *ébahi;* but I should not have fancied him to be such a shy person."

"Never was anybody less shy," said Lucy.

"He did look thunderstruck, to be sure," said Harriet. "Margaret, why did you not speak to him before?"

Margaret roused herself. "I believe I am shy Harriet," she said.

"Do you think him handsome, Harriet?" asked Lucy playing with the fringe of her parasol.

"Of course not," said Harriet, "he is as dark as a Moor."

"I don't think that an objection," said Lucy. "I rather like that sort of expressive face. I fancy a painter would never be tired of watching him."

"We must get him for Alphonse;" said Harriet musing, "he looks foreign; and he is graceful in his gestures. Then, if Margaret prefers Everard, what a chance for Miss Campbell. Lucy! Ah! stop the carriage! Thompson, a glass of water—there is a cottage—run—Miss Capel has fainted!"

CHAPTER XII.

Org. Time can never
On the white table of unguilty faith
Write counterfeit dishonour.

FORD.

"It was the heat, Harriet, indeed. Mrs. Fitzpatrick will tell you that I cannot bear hot weather," said Margaret earnestly.

"Mrs. Fitzpatrick is not in the room, *ma mie*," said Harriet, taking a chair just opposite to Margaret. "I certainly never knew such a heroine as you are. Going down to dinner after an obstinate fainting fit; divinely dressed, and looking like a very pale angel. Now I have said a generous thing, because I see your white dress is more prettily made than mine; but I make a great exertion and forgive you."

Margaret smiled.

"Well now, Margaret, what was it? This is the second time of asking. Beware of the third."

"I have told you, dear Harriet," said Margaret. "I was not well when I came. I felt wretchedly all yesterday, and Mrs. Fitzpatrick thought the journey had been too much for one day; she means to divide it when we go back."

"When you go back! That will not be while I am here, I can tell you," said Harriet. "Oh! I do wish Margaret that you were married. I hate single women!"

"I really cannot help that, Harriet," said Margaret.

"I told you all about my affair with George;" said Harriet with emphasis.

"True, dear Harriet, but I was not a married woman!" said Margaret, trying to rally her spirits.

"If you think I should repeat anything to George, you are quite mistaken," said Harriet, "he may think himself very well off if I confide to him my own affairs."

"But, indeed, dear Harriet, I have no affairs to confide;" persisted poor Margaret.

"You cannot be in love with Mr. Haveloc;" said Harriet musing, and trying to recal what happened at Chirke Weston, the only time she saw them both together.

"In love with him—no!" said Margaret drawing herself up, and speaking with energy.

"Bravo! you handsome little creature;" cried Harriet catching her in her arms, and covering her with kisses, "but come, it is a dull party to-day, but we will make up for it to-morrow."

"If it was a dull party, it was at least a very large one. The drawing-room was full. Lady Raymond, with jewels in her dress and hair, was standing by a vase of flowers, showing something choice to one of the guests. Lord Raymond came in quietly, spoke to the company, went up to his wife and looked at her dress, took hold of one of her ornaments, with some curio-

sity, and then stood on the hearth-rug until dinner was ready.

Margaret was assigned to Everard Gage, who never talked if he could help it: and she felt the luxury of repose and silence during this grand, tedious dinner.

When they were again in the drawing-room, the ladies divided into little knots according to their tastes and degrees of intimacy. Mrs. Fitzpatrick was seated in one of the windows; Margaret at a stand near her, looking over some prints; Harriet was discussing, with Miss Campbell and Lady James Deacon, the French vaudeville they meant to act.

Lady Raymond, whose feelings, though not very deep, were kindly, seated herself beside Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"We met a very old friend of yours to-day, quite unexpectedly," she said in a low voice.

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick with great interest. "Was it Mr Haveloc? Is he at Tynebrook?"

"He is just arrived," said Lucy, "and he dines with us to-morrow. I thought you would like to know."

"Thank you; I shall be truly glad to see him;" said Mrs. Fitzpatrick with a sigh.

"I know it all," said Lucy in a sympathising tone. "Raymond told me he was engaged to my poor cousin." For Lady Raymond having adopted Mrs. Fitzpatrick to that degree of relationship, extended the kindred to her lost daughter.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick was truth itself; there was no occasion to enter into detail; but she could not avoid correcting an erroneous statement of facts.

"He is a very intimate and tried friend of mine," she said; "but he was not engaged, nor even attached to my daughter in the common sense of the word. He did not form our acquaintance until after Aveline had too clearly shown a tendency to the complaint which destroyed her. There could have been no thought of marriage between them; but being in my neighbourhood, during the latter part of her illness, he paid me such

frequent visits, that, had there been any gossip in that solitary place, I dare say it would have ascribed such a reason for his conduct. I am sure he was like a son to me, at a time when I was deeply in need of support. And it is possible that under other circumstances, if his heart was disengaged, of which I am entirely ignorant, the regard and respect that he felt for my daughter might have ripened into a permanent attachment."

"Of course it would; it is just the same thing. How melancholy!" said Lucy, with the usual amount of pity in her voice. "And so after all, my dear Mrs. Fitzpatrick, you are to be the future mistress of Tynebrook."

"Do be reasonable, my dear Lady Raymond," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick, laughing. "I have always heard it considered hazardous for ladies to think of single men as their brothers: but I never heard that the same danger existed when they looked upon them as sons."

The prints fell from Margaret's hands.

She sat listening—breathless—with parted lips, and eyes fixed, to every word that Mrs. Fitzpatrick uttered.

At first she could not think; she seemed turned to stone. Her next feeling was a sense of oppression, which made her find the crowded room intolerable. She looked cautiously round, and seeing every one engaged in their own pursuits, she made her escape through one of the open windows into the shrubbery.

And all this she might have known easily before. She must often have been within a hair's breadth of knowing, when anything moved Mrs. Fitzpatrick to some distant allusion to her daughter.

And two years had passed, during which she had been guilty of such injustice, such baseness; for had she loved nobly, would she have believed appearances against him? She, who was so slow to believe evil of the most casual acquaintance. All her sorrow, all her agony had been nothing to this cor-

roding sense of shame to which she was now delivered.

When she had believed herself sinned against, she knew where to seek for alleviation; but how shield her heart from the intolerable sting of believing herself to be the one in fault? To have ruined her happiness for life through a narrowness of soul that refused to trust implicitly the heart and honour of the man she had chosen!

To her high generosity of feeling the anguish that these reflections brought with them was intolerable.

Sinking on a seat, she remained motionless—tearless; endeavouring to still by the pressure of her hands, the wild beating of her heart. And few people, after committing some deadly crime, would have felt more conscience-stricken, more self-debased, than Margaret, when she reproached herself for the ungenerous want of a romantic confidence.

How long she sat there she knew not;

but she was roused by the clear voice of Harriet, among the shrubs exclaiming:

"Run, Everard! Why don't you run? How can you expect to find any one at this snail's pace?"

"I do run," was the faint reply.

Margaret, thinking it better to declare herself, called to Harriet, who was presently at her side. Everard Gage creeping slowly after.

Harriet turned to look at him.

"Come, make haste, and give Miss Capel your arm—or, no; run as fast as you can to the house, and bring out a shawl."

Everard turned, and disappeared slowly down the walk.

Well, now, ma mie," said Harriet, sitting down beside her; "was the room too hot?"

"Yes; but it was rather the sound of so many voices that disturbed me," said Margaret.

"Well, then, little one, go to bed," said Harriet. "If you sleep soundly, you

will be well to-morrow. I can't think what is come to the child; her hands are as cold as ice."

Margaret took Harriet's arm, and returned to the house. At the portico, they met Everard Gage, who had just succeeded in finding a shawl. Harriet rallied him upon the haste he had made, attempted to push him out of her path with the points of her slender fingers, and led Margaret up the great staircase.

She helped to undress her with great care and quickness, brought her some coffee, saw her drink it, and then desired her to go to sleep.

Strange to say, she had not long been out of the room, before Margaret obeyed her directions, and fell into a profound slumber.

Yielding to the advice of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, it was late in the morning before she went down stairs.

As the day was very hot, the ladies had all agreed not to go out. The evening was the gay time at Wardenscourt; and it was

good policy not to look fagged, when there were so many people always to dinner.

Margaret found the ladies assembled, all at their worsted work, except Harriet, who was playing with Lady James Deacon's little boy, and enticing him to do all sorts of mischief to the ladies' work-baskets.

Lady James had no objection that her darling should be amused at the expense of worsteds and floss silks, so long as he kept his hands out of her particular basket; and Harriet raced him round the room like a kitten, trailing after him half a dozen brilliant-coloured balls.

Miss Campbell, who was pretty, in spite of her red hair, and possessed all the mysterious powers of attracting the other sex, common to ladies of that hue, became an object of serious interest to Margaret.

She remembered Mr. Haveloc's smile, when he thought he was speaking to Miss Campbell; she recollected that he had not positively declined the part of Alphonse,

and Miss Campbell seemed only to be uncertain about accepting Camille, until she knew definitely, who was to enact the lover.

As she reclined in a low arm-chair, displaying the most slender ancle conceivable, and a thin foot incomparably shod, with her delicate blue muslin dress, her exquisite collar, and piquante cap of blue gauze artfully commingled with lace, Margaret thought that no one could deny her the meed of remarkable elegance. True, that extreme slenderness of form was adverse to an evening toilet, the neck and arms gained considerably by being left to the imagination; but she was exceedingly clever —talked good nonsense, laughed prettily, and sang with great archness and point. She was certain of a crowd of gentlemen round the piano, whenever she went to it: and Margaret who had scarcely ever seen Mr. Haveloc in society, did not know at all the style of person he generally admired. Harriet called her a knitting pin, a javelin-

woman, and every other term she could coin expressive of her distaste for that style of beauty; but Harriet was no guide in the present instance; no test of what Mr. Haveloc might like. And feeling sure that she was, by her own act, for ever divided from Mr. Haveloc, she was conscious of a feverish desire to know on whom his choice would fall.

The ladies dispersed to dress rather earlier than usual, there were three or four officers coming, and women seem aware that fine clothes are never wasted upon men in that profession.

Margaret whose dress was always simple, came down soon into the deserted drawing-room, and finding Mrs. Fitzpatrick reading at a table, she joined her, and read over her shoulder. It was the "Records of Woman." They looked as if grouped for a picture, and Harriet who was coming in at the doorway with Mr. Haveloc, who had just arrived, stopped him and bade him admire the attitude.

Margaret's face was turned from them, but her extended arm, as white and rounded as that of a statue, was passed over Mrs. Fitzpatrick's shoulder, tracing the lines with her finger. Mr. Haveloc stayed a moment, in obedience to Mrs. Gage, then came abruptly up to Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

" My dear Mrs. Fitzpatrick!"

" Mr. Haveloc—this is a pleasure!"

Margaret withdrew her hand softly, and passing behind them, went to one of the sofas and sat down beside Harriet. Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Haveloc continued in earnest conversation. Directly after he had spoken to her, he looked round as if to address Margaret, but finding her gone, and people scattered between them, for the room was now filling, he turned back again.

Margaret tried to keep up a conversation with Harriet; she took up her fan, and asked Mrs. Gage to show her some of the Spanish movements with it. Harriet, full of fun, complied. She showed her how to

say, " How are you—come, and see me," and other little sentences of the kind; but she warned her that this accomplishment did not depend solely on the dexterous handling of the fan, but required to be seconded by the expression of the lady's eye.

Lord James Deacon wished to share the lesson; but at the first trial, he endangered the ivory sticks, and Harriet took the fan from his hand. Lucy declined a trial, and Everard got to the farthest end of the room, behind the piano, because Harriet had already called to him for a footstool. Lord Raymond said gravely that he did not think the Spanish women could be much better than they should be; and that he thought these tricks with fans were as bad as sending about tulips, and cinders, and rubbish, as the women did in Turkey.

Lady Raymond laughed at him, and so did all the others. Miss Campbell was wild to learn, and Margaret surrendered her place to her; but dinner was announced

before the lesson could proceed. Margaret, as usual, was assigned to Everard Gage, and as usual they went on very peaceably.

Mr. Haveloc was between Miss Campbell, and Mrs. Fitzpatrick, but he appeared to devote all his attention to the latter lady. Lord James Deacon treated Margaret with his usual insolent neglect; staring hard at her when it suited him, and at other times neither addressing a word to her, nor helping her to what she wanted at table.

In the evening, Lady Raymond came up to Mr. Haveloc who was standing by Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and renewed her entreaties that he would take the part of Alphonse.

He declined, laughing—she pressed the point; she brought Lord Raymond to press the point—still he laughed it off.

Nothing he should like better than to play, if he could; but it was a weakness of his, that he could not overcome. He was too diffident to succeed on the boards.

Harriet accused him of being a Saint.

He bowed to the compliment, and said

he saw neither reason nor precedent for saints to put on the buskin when they had no turn for wearing it.

Lady James Deacon who had secretly destined him for her friend Miss Campbell, now called on that young lady to persuade him.

Miss Campbell was sitting on a sofa making pencil alterations in a song. She looked up with her quaint expression.

"Oh, don't teaze him!" she said, "I would not. Put his name down, and send him a part-book, if you cannot get a *better* Alphonse."

She gave her speeches all the point in tone and manner of a good actress. Mr. Haveloc took a seat by her side.

"Is that your advice, Miss Campbell?" he said, "they should make you stage-manager."

"Lord James is stage-manager," she replied, without raising her eyes from the sheet of music she was marking.

"Are you going to sing, Miss Campbell?" he asked.

"Oh! if I'm properly begged and prayed;" she returned, still making dots on the paper on her knee.

"How much begging and praying do you require?"

"*Try*." she said, suddenly raising her quaint eyes.

Every body laughed, Mr. Haveloc as much as the rest.

"Everard! cried Harriet, making way for him, "see if *you* possess sufficient oratory to persuade Miss Campbell."

"*Do*," said he, putting on his softest look. They all laughed again. Miss Campbell rose, and walked idly to the piano.

"No eloquence like the laconic," said Mr. Haveloc to Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"So I perceive," she said smiling, "it was equal to the Spartan—*If*."

But Miss Campbell having tried over the embellishments with her right hand, rose from the instrument.

The officers surrounded her with various

exclamations, she paid no sort of attention to them, and resumed her seat beside Mr. Haveloc.

"What have we all done," said he, "that you disappoint us in this manner."

"Nothing at all," said she, putting the music in his hand, "but Schubert has done something, he has written this accompaniment in so many flats, that it is beyond me to read, and sing at once."

"Then let some one accompany you."

"La chose est faisible," said she, "go and canvass for me."

"What do you want," asked Lady Raymond.

"Only a player," he returned, "will you be so charitable?"

"Oh! not at sight, I wish I could. Harriet!"

No; Harriet would not volunteer, she had her own private reasons, which she would not reveal. The fact was, that she had made up her mind to forward Margaret's interest with Mr. Haveloc, and to cross Miss Campbell in her endeavours.

Lady James would not undertake Shcubert, nor would Mrs. Leslie, nor any of the Miss Veseys.

"Margaret will, I am sure," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

Margaret who had been detained in conversation by one of the officers, who had heard she had a good fortune, rose, and proffered her services. The officer, knowing he must undergo a certain amount of trouble if he hoped to get her money, led her to the piano, and arranged the music. Margaret took her place with the pleasing consciousness that Mr. Haveloc was about a yard behind her, listening with eager delight to the singer. It was well worth listening to, never was a clearer, or sweeter voice, and her German was perfect. Even Everard said, "He never had—" which was rather a long sentence for him, and all united in begging for something else.

Miss Campbell allowed herself to be persuaded, and selected one of Vestris's ballads.

"You will not want me for that, I think," said Margaret, looking up to Miss Campbell.

"No, thank you very much, how beautifully you play," said Miss Campbell, making way for her.

Some one moved a chair out of her path, it was Mr. Haveloc. She bowed, glided quietly across the room, and sank into a chair, heart-sick. Mr. Haveloc, who had followed her, leaned against a table by her side. She felt so humbled now that she knew the real motives of his conduct, that she did not venture to lift up her eyes, but sat with her hands clasped listlessly in her lap, trying to feel calm and composed. He remained silent for a few moments, finding it as difficult as she did, to be calm.

"I did not know you, yesterday, Miss Capel," he said at last, "at least, not till I had put you in the carriage. I am very near-sighted."

To tell her so! This was, indeed, proclaiming that he had forgotten all their former intimacy. She looked up, trying to

speak. There was a pause. He stood playing with his eye-glass; he seemed to have something else to say, and Margaret only hoped he would make haste, for she felt as if she could not bear up much longer. At last he said in a very low tone:

"We can never be entire strangers to each other; we have one memory between us—the memory of your uncle."

Margaret tried to reply in vain. She was trembling so much, that she feared she should fall from her chair. Mrs. Fitzpatrick came up to her at the moment.

"Come, my child," she said, "I must send you to bed early until you are quite strong again. Good night."

Margaret rose, gave a bow in passing to Mr. Haveloc, without daring to raise her eyes, and made her way through the officers who were standing round Harriet. Mrs. Gage relating to them the history of the altar-cloth, and the officers laughing almost into convulsions, and declaring that Mrs. Gage and the altar-cloth would certainly be the death of all of them.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mary. Why thinks King Henry's son that Margaret's love
Hangs in the uncertain balance of proud time?
That death shall make a discord of our thoughts?

GREENE.

Faithe is the first, and principally to tell,
And verie love requirith soche credence,
That eche beleve othir true as the gospel,
In true menyng and trustie confidence.

THE X COMMANDMENTS OF LOVE.

MARGARET had promised to breakfast with Harriet every day in the Oratory. When she went in the next morning, the room was vacant; the table spread, the urn steaming, the tea made, and newspapers laid ready. She took up one and seated herself to wait. Presently she heard voices in the passage which divided the Oratory

from Harriet's room. The speakers were Harriet and Everard Gage.

"Why do you interfere with me?" said Everard, in a tone that would have been cross but for the exertion.

"Because you are a slug," was Harriet's flattering reply, "I gave you every chance for two days, and now I will take her away from you. You shall not have her."

"A man can't make an offer in two days," said Everard.

"No, but he can make himself agreeable in half a day, instead of that you have behaved like a stupid wax doll; and so I have settled to give Miss Capel to some one else. And you can't help yourself!" said Harriet in a tone of exultation that it was very difficult to bear temperately.

"I like that," said Everard, "I shall ask George if it is right for you to make matches."

A peal of laughter from Harriet, that threatened to be interminable—in the midst of which George Gage, coming through the

passage on his way to the Oratory, was stopped by the disputants—and then ensued a great deal of laughing from himself and Harriet, mixed with a low, complaining noise from Everard, which soon sank into silence. Margaret not caring to be found there, escaped to her own room, and when she was summoned by Mrs. Thompson, she found all three seated peaceably at the table. Everard sat next her, and after handing her all she wanted, took a moss rose-bud from his coat, and presented it to her. Margaret thanked him, and laid it by her plate. Harriet snatched it up and put it in her own dress. Mr. Gage tried to look serious, and Everard did not seem to know how to take it. But he made no more attempts at conciliating Margaret during breakfast. It was hard work at the best, but when there was another person counteracting all you did, it was too gigantic an adventure.

"I will tell you some news, ma mie," said Harriet, "Bessy and Uncle Gage will be here next week. Mr. Haveloc stays for

the pigeon shooting, the day after to-morrow; and Everard says he will read the part of Alphonse at our rehearsals. And the play is to come off on Monday."

"Haveloc will stay for the play, I suppose," said Mr. Gage.

"Oh, true!" said Harriet, "Lucy settled that with him, the last thing. But he will not act—so provoking; I shall have to teach Everard, at last."

"I cannot learn all that by heart," said Everard.

"Oh, yes, you will to please me!" said Harriet, "you will be so much admired. Think how well you will look, so like a dear wax-work!"

"Then you must do something for me in return," said Everard.

"Oh! that is Jewish; but I will do several things, if you are quite perfect."

"You know what I mean," said Everard.

"Yes, I know all about it," said Harriet, "there, take my part-book, go down into

the library, and have all that scene perfect before I come."

"Well, but where are you going? I could sit here, and you read it out to me, I should learn it faster that way."

"Take him away, George, do!" cried Harriet stamping her foot.

The brothers disappeared together, and Harriet remained leaning against the window, making some mental calculations, which she seemed counting on her fingers.

"Yes," she said to herself, at last, "I will amuse Everard with Miss Campbell, and then Margaret—"

Margaret started in fear.

"Margaret!" said Harriet, "I have resolved that you shall be mistress of Tynebrook."

Margaret burst into one of her rare passions of tears. Harriet was frightened, and distressed, and still more puzzled.

"I do declare, little one, I cannot make you out," said she, as soon as she had caressed Margaret into something like calm-

ness again ; " first you faint, and then you cry, and all for some mysterious reason I cannot fathom. If I do find out your secret, I will have no mercy on you."

" But listen Harriet," said Margaret, " I am so vexed when you plan such things; and not being well, everything agitates me."

" Well I won't teaze the little beauty," said Harriet; " let us go down and find something to amuse you. But Margaret," said she, hanging on the threshold, " remember I have had the disorder, and am familiar with the symptoms."

Lord James was in the library acting with Miss Campbell, Lucy holding the book. The father was to ride over in the course of the morning; he was the officer who had shown some disposition for Margaret's money the evening before. Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Haveloc were walking in the shrubberies. Margaret took out her netting, and sat down in the shade, out of every one's way. Harriet threw herself on

the scene, made Lucy read the part of M. Dumenil, until the officer should appear, and commanded the play to begin again. Everard was forced forward, and laughed at by Harriet, who called him a wax-work, and offered him a letter of introduction to Mme. Tussaud, and then praised him into good humour again; and recommended him to Miss Campbell for instruction, which that young lady willingly undertook. The officer came in, and had no time to molest Margaret, for he was seized upon by Harriet, and had his part-book snatched from him, and marked full of stage directions, and was turned on among the tables and chairs, to blunder through his rôle, before he had time to look round, or discover who was in the room.

Harriet's acting was inimitable, like every thing she undertook. The officer was not very bad; Lord James pretty well, and Miss Campbell full of an arch simplicity, that showed her as accomplished on, as she was off the stage. In the midst of it all,

Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Haveloc entered with Lord Raymond.

His Lordship was delighted at the amusement provided for him so unexpectedly. He signed his companions to chairs, and sat down and clapped with great vigour. Then down came Lady James, who took a chair next to Mr. Haveloc, and began to abuse him on his want of gallantry in declining the part of Alphonse. She believed he was the only man who would refuse an opportunity of playing with her friend Miss Campbell.

Mr. Haveloc said that he was selfish enough to wish to enjoy Miss Campbell's excellent acting thoroughly, which he could not have done, had he played with her.

Lady James was appeased by this answer, which, did not, however, sound quite sincere to Margaret's ear, proceeded to give him a catalogue of all her young friend's merits, which lasted, so numerous were they, until the play had been read through. Then the actors dispersed, the officer to the back of

Margaret's chair, Everard to the nearest sofa, Lord James to Lady Raymond, and Harriet to Mr. Haveloc. Yes, just as Lady James had called Miss Campbell to her, and assigned her the seat next that gentleman, Harriet beckoned him to the window, and swept him out upon the lawn.

"I say, do you know the name of this red thing," said she, pointing to a flower in one of the beds.

"No, I don't. I have it, but I have forgotten the name," he said.

"How long have you been at Tynebrook?"

"About two months."

"What! have you done all that to the church in two months?"

"Every bit of it. I was in Norway three months ago."

"Ah! You are a great traveller, I believe,"

"I have done little else for the last two years."

"Well, that is a very pleasant way of passing time."

"I don't know that it is quite right," said Mr. Haveloc. "One leaves all one's duties behind in travelling; that is one of its great attractions." Then feeling that his companion was not very likely to sympathize with him, he changed the subject.

"I saw your chestnut this morning, Mrs. Gage. He is superb. I hardly know such a beautiful head."

"Has he not? And so tame. Did George go with you?"

"He did, and the chestnut held a very rational conversation with him?"

"You admire him, as much as I did your altar-cloth."

"I do, indeed."

"I think you must have got it on purpose for your wedding, Mr. Havleoc," said Harriet.

"I am afraid it will not serve that turn," he replied; "for there is no lady in my parish

above the condition of a small farmer's daughter. Tynebrook is a wilderness."

"Ah, true! the lady must be married in her own parish," said Harriet, narrowly regarding his countenance.

"That is the etiquette, I believe," he said, gravely; and as she did not speak again directly, he turned quietly and courteously away, and walked to the library.

As soon as Harriet made the move, most of the party strolled away under the trees. The officer, who was unusually disagreeable in Margaret's eyes, asked her if she would not follow their example, and offered his arm, as if to decide her choice.

Margaret thanked him, but said she preferred sitting quiet, as the day was hot; and she was in a hurry to finish her netting.

The officer said she was very prudent, and taking a chair, offered to read to her.

Margaret's vexation knew no bounds, but she was not aware that the man wanted her money, and she thought he really meant it as a civility, so she composed herself to

listen. But after a few sentences, horribly read, her impatience could not be controlled. She rose, muttered something about wanting more silk, and went to her room to be quiet.

Mr. Haveloc came in the moment after, found Everard asleep on a sofa, and the officer, still seated with the book in his hand, wondering how any girl could go away while he was sitting by her.

Margaret did not leave her room till dinner time. Harriet paid her a visit, when she thought it proper she should have some luncheon, with sandwiches, and a plate of delicious ice.

Margaret was thankful for the ice, and gratified by Harriet's kindness. Her friend told her that Miss Campbell was gone into the paddock to see Lord James shoot pigeons, to practice for the match; and that Mr. Haveloc, when it came to the point, declared he could not shoot, and was sitting with Lucy, nursing Flora. But though she told this as carelessly as any other piece of news,

she saw by the warm colour that rushed into Margaret's face, that she had set her mind at rest for the present.

" Well, Miss Capel," said Mason, as she put the finishing touch to her hair, " you do look splendid to-day, ma'am ;" and Mason pushed down the cheval-glass, that her young lady might take a survey of herself.

" Yes, I am a little flushed by the heat," said Margaret, looking carelessly over her shoulder into the glass ; " put a white rose in my hair."

Mason obeyed. Margaret lingered about the room until she thought dinner was on the point of being announced, and then went quietly into the drawing-room, and sat down out of the way, as she hoped. But Harriet's quick eye detected her in a moment. Leaving her fan in Mr. Haveloc's hands, she crossed over to her directly.

" Child ! what have you done to make yourself so beautiful," she asked. " You are all steeped in lilies and roses."

"I have recovered my journey by this time," said Margaret, smiling; "that is all."

"I am playing a game against Lady James," said Harriet. "It has been my amusement all day long to cross her. She is trying to get Mr. Haveloc for Miss Campbell. You will see how I manage. I want him for myself."

"For yourself, Harriet?"

"Yes, to flirt with. Now look!"

Dinner was announced. Lady James glanced at Miss Campbell, who was seated by her, and then at Mr. Haveloc, who was standing before her talking.

"My fan, please, Mr. Haveloc!" cried Harriet from the other side of the room.

He had laid it down on one of the tables, and started off to find it. While he was searching about, with his glass at his eye, Harriet came up to him.

"Why, there it is. Good gracious! Come, we shall be late;" said she seizing the fan, and taking his arm, she sailed

past the discomforted Miss Campbell and Lady James.

Margaret was next to Mr. Gage at dinner, and he entertained her with an account of the morning's shooting.

He said he was quite sorry for Mr. Haveloc; actually, he had confessed he could not see a pigeon five yards off—so unusual! Mr. Gage had strongly recommended him to have a glass fixed on his gun, but he had remarked that "le jeu ne valait pas la chandelle." Mr. Gage considered it a real affliction to be deprived of almost every rational means of amusement. Pigeon shooting was only one branch of the rational pursuits, there was shooting in general. He scarcely knew, indeed, how a man could hunt if he did not see a few feet in front of his horse's head. And yet Haveloc was a fair shot with a pistol. But then Miss Capel would recollect that in pistol shooting, the mark was stationary.

Miss Capel gave due attention to these items of discourse, and then Mr. Gage went on.

Really Haveloc was a very good fellow. He did not think him so religious as people made out. He had persuaded them to go to Tynebrook for trout fishing to-morrow. They were to dine there late, and return the next morning—a late dinner even in these days—ten o'clock—that was Raymond's idea. He said anglers lost the best part of the day when they left off before the cool of the evening. He remembered having himself caught the finest trout he ever saw, one evening about nine o'clock. He always regretted he had not that fish weighed.

Margaret acceded to these remarks with a proper degree of interest. She felt better, stronger than she had done before, more able to be amused with what passed around her. The fact was, she said to herself, that now her meeting with Mr. Haveloc was over—she had been in dread of it; and though in the same house, they hardly saw or spoke to each other, therefore there was nothing more to fear or hope—no suspense left.

Harriet meanwhile was keeping up a

lively conversation with Mr. Haveloc. At last she said:

"Are you one of Miss Capel's admirers? Every one here thinks her very beautiful."

"Very much so," replied Mr. Haveloc, without looking towards Margaret.

"You knew her uncle very well. I suppose you must have seen a good deal of her at Ashhdale?"

"I did. She was very young then."

"Do you find her much altered?"

"A little—a very little."

Come! thought Harriet, whose keen ear discovered a slight faultering in his carefully guarded tone. It is mutual whatever it is. That is just what I wanted to discover. Whether or not this discovery tended to put her into good spirits, she was unusually brilliant that evening at the rehearsal. Everybody seemed animated by her.

Miss Campbell tried to play up to her, as the actors call it. The officer repeated his assurance that she had a great genius

for the stage, and even Everard read his part a little as if he meant it.

Margaret was sitting by Mrs. Fitzpatrick, holding Harriet's part-book, when Mr. Haveloc and Mr. Gage came in together. Mr. Haveloc came to Mrs. Fitzpatrick's chair, and Mr. Gage to Margaret's.

"You have not been prevailed upon to lend your aid, Miss Capel," said Mr. Gage.

"No," said Margaret, "happily I was not wanted."

"I could not fancy Margaret acting," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

"Nor I," said Mr. Haveloc, suddenly.

Margaret blushed, and kept her eyes fixed on the book without distinguishing a word.

"Where am I, Margaret?" asked Harriet. "What do I say next?"

Margaret had lost the place, and now her fingers trembled so much, she could not find it. Mrs. Fitzpatrick laughed at her.

Mr. Gage took the book, and gave Har-

riet the cue. At last the actors came to a conclusion. They dispersed about the room. Harriet and Miss Campbell were drinking coffee, and declaring themselves parched with thirst.

The officer brought himself and his coffee cup to Margaret's chair, "and hoped she had been amused, and trusted he should presently hear her sing; and begged that she would not laugh at him when he acted on Monday."

Those who knew her well, could have detected beneath the passive civility of her manner, that she was very little disposed to laugh at him, for there was something in the texture of her mind that made common people exceedingly repulsive to her, and a coarser piece of Dowlas than this officer seldom issued, even out of a barrack.

The chords of the harp were now heard from the adjoining drawing-room. Miss Campbell was performing a fantasia. Harriet came into the library snapping her fan, and looking discomposed.

"She is a fixture," said Mrs. Gage, pointing with her fan in the direction of the sounds; "it is so vexatious, for I had set my mind on Margaret singing the scene from 'Der Freischutz.'"

Lucy, to whom this speech was addressed, laughed; and Margaret, escaping from the officer, joined them, and learned the cause of offence.

"My dear Harriet," said Margaret, "I will sing to you at any time. Do forgive Miss Campbell."

"I will not, she does it on purpose, it is managed between her and Lady James, to keep you from the piano. How I detest red hair!"

Margaret laughed: "Do not detest it in the present instance, when it is connected with so charming a voice. If I had been quite—well—last night, how I should have enjoyed that romance of Schubert's."

There was something in her voice, her slight hesitation, that was very touching. Harriet caught her hands in hers.

"Is she not, Lucy?"

"That she is, indeed," said Lady Raymond, affectionately.

"Is—what?" said Margaret, looking frightened.

"Is a very dear little creature," said Harriet, turning away.

"I think you have quite made a conquest of Captain Smithson," said Lucy, smiling.

Margaret shuddered.

"Oh! you shall not have him, if you don't wish it," said Lady Raymond; "come and sit by me, until Miss Campbell has done singing. Is that you, Mr. Haveloc? Tell us something to amuse us. Is it true that there is a ghost at Tynebrook?"

Mr. Haveloc started, drew a chair near Lady Raymond's, and sat down:—"A decided ghost, and no end of mysterious sounds and footsteps."

"Indeed! I hope Raymond will hear some to-morrow night. Ah!"

Lady Raymond uttered such a scream,

that every one hurried into the library, Lord Raymond among them. She had seen a flash of lightning.

"Nonsense," said Lord Raymond.

"All fancy," said Harriet.

"Talking of ghosts," said Mr. Haveloc.

"No one else saw it," said Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

While they were all speaking, and persuading Lucy that it was impossible, such a crash of thunder burst over the house, as convinced them that her statement was correct. Flash followed flash, and peal rolled hoarsely after peal. Lucy and Harriet were both very much afraid of thunder, it ran in the family. They sat white and trembling, Lucy holding Lord Raymond's hand, and Harriet keeping Mr. Gage standing close to her.

Now Lady Raymond was in an interesting state of health, and all the matrons of the party surrounded her, and urged her to take some sal volatile, and go to bed. Lucy consented to the sal volatile, but she would

not hear of going to bed—impossible! she never could sleep during a thunder-storm.

And it was rather unfortunate that she not only refused to go to bed herself, but would not allow any one else to do so; all the guests must sit round, and bear her company. She suffered herself to be laid upon a sofa, and Lord Raymond was to sit by her side, and hold her hand. She would not ever hear of the officer going home. She said it would be tempting Providence; and was quite miserable till he seated himself in an arm-chair among the others, thinking of the Day of Judgment, and wishing he could drown the thought in brandy and cigars.

It was a dreadful storm; there were no pauses between the rapid explosions, the intolerable glare of the lightning. Even Mrs. Fitzpatrick sat with white lips. Harriet was crying on Mr. Gage's shoulder; Everard, tired of sitting up, was snoring in an arm-chair. Margaret looked round, wondering at the terror they all seemed to

feel. They must be *very* happy she thought to feel such fear at the remote danger which attends such a scene.

She looked involuntarily for Mr. Haveloc, he was not in the room. Still the storm did not abate. George Gage, who had been supporting Harriet for an hour without repining, now looked at his watch.

"Twelve o'clock! I say Harriet, would you mind Everard looking after you, while I went to smoke a cigar?"

"Oh! hear him—how profane he is!" sobbed Harriet, "to talk of smoking, with that — oh, gracious! that dreadful noise going on!"

"Well, I will not if you have any dislike—"

"By Jove, I must be off now," said Captain Smithson rising.

"No! for Heaven's sake don't be imprudent, Captain Smithson," cried Lucy, looking up, "you will be killed."

"And if you are," said Harriet, drying

her eyes, " it will never do ; for we shall not be able to find another 'father,' by Monday."

"No, no, come with me Smithson," said Mr. Gage, "There Harriet. I am sure you don't mind it now, only look at Miss Capel."

But not an inch would Harriet let him stir. Captain Smithson longing for something to drink, made a sign to Mr. Gage, and slipped out. Margaret did not like the idea of waiting there till morning. She remembered that the conservatory commanded a very extensive view that reached to the sea ; and she thought how grand that rich expanse of country would look, when summoned into life by each vivid flash of lightning.

Miss Campbell well knowing that the sickly fairness of her complexion would not stand late hours, had managed to steal off to bed. Margaret thought she should be able to follow her example—she moved gently to the door, and as no voice was

raised in disapproval of her attempt, she hurried through the empty drawing-room, gained the hall, ran across, and into the large conservatory. As the house stood upon high ground, nearly twenty miles of country were visible between the windows and the sea. On one side a steep hill rose clothed with trees, so as almost to shut out the sky, and swept abruptly down to the level ground, where copse and thicket, and fertile meadows succeeded each other in many tinted chequer work, mingled with hamlets and solitary church spires. All was dark as night—a lamp hung over the door which led to the conservatory, but this did not serve to light more than a few yards of the marble pathway, which led between the orange trees. Margaret walked to the end of the path, and waited for a flash. It came, and for a single moment every tree and every roof in the wide landscape was seen bathed in light beneath the angry sky—the silver strip of sea on the horizon glancing like a mirror, under the

black clouds. It was a grand spectacle, as the keen lightning was seen ripping up the dark masses, or dropping like a quivering dart into the thick tree tops. And the sudden darkness, and the solemn thunder rolling fainter and more faint, seemed to complete the magnificence of the hour.

At length, the interval between the peals became longer, and Margaret who had been conscious of no fatigue while watching the storm, began to feel sleepy and exhausted. After waiting some minutes, during which, such was the stillness, she could hear her own pulse, she turned away, and saying half to herself, "It is over, now;" she moved slowly down the path.

All at once a sharp light blazed across her eyes—a peal that deafened her—a crash —a sound as of musquetry just over head —a quick shower of hail and broken glass together, rattling upon the marble pavement. She raised her arms, as if to save herself, when she was suddenly seized, and whirled out into the hall so quickly, that she lost her breath, almost her senses.

"Are you hurt?"

Margaret looked up at her questioner. The rattling noise of the breaking glass—the tremendous sound above, that seemed to rock the walls of the house, so sudden, so bewildering, frightened away her voice. She looked round in complete amaze. She was sitting on one of the hall chairs, and Mr. Haveloc supporting her, kneeling by her side.

"Are you not hurt?" he asked again.

She passed her hand over her eyes, and gazed around, still confused. "No," said she, "what was it?"

"The hail came suddenly," he said.

"Yes, it did—but—were you there?" she asked.

"I was."

"The storm was—very—beautiful," said she losing her voice in tears before the words were ended.

"I was not watching the storm," he replied.

Overcome by agitation and fright, her nerves thoroughly unstrung by the feelings

of the few preceding days, she covered her face with her hands, and gave way to her tears. There was a silence, only broken by her heavy sobs. The thunder had ceased, —the hail was over, only the large fast drops of rain fell splashing among the stiff orange leaves.

"Margaret," he said, "tell me now. What have I done?"

"Nothing—nothing!" she faltered through her tears.

"Then it was for no fault of mine; the change was in yourself," said he suddenly. "You had seen—you had loved; and it has been your turn to suffer."

"I have suffered, Claude," said Margaret withdrawing her hands from her face.

Her voice, her aspect, so inimitably tender and mournful, struck him to the heart.

She had gained courage and composure, and went on.

"And it is a comfort to me to have seen and spoken with you once again," said she;

"because having done you an injustice, in my thoughts, I am glad to tell you so. I am pleased to think that you acted as I should have most desired, had I known the facts which were so cruelly perverted to me. But still—I hope," she added, as she rose to go, "that as I must remain here for the present, you will not often come to the house, because the sight of you reminds me too forcibly of those old times."

How exquisitely graceful she looked; with that imploring attitude—that bashful entreaty in her gesture.

"But, I don't understand—" he said, detaining her.

"No—it is a long story," said Margaret sadly.

"But why not tell it me? Have I not a right to know it? I, who love you better than anything in the world?"

Her smiles came back—her blushes.

"If you wish it," she said, "only not now. Still I must say for myself, that every one believed as I did. Even your friends

here, entirely thought so till Mrs. Fitzpatrick set them right."

"But—believed what?"

"That you were engaged to Miss Fitzpatrick."

"What—engaged—and when? Good Heavens! And you, Margaret—to Miss Fitzpatrick! How could you believe such an incredible lie?"

"Don't ask me, Claude," said Margaret, feeling as if it really had been too bad in her to credit her own eyesight, as well as the assurance of every one she came near.

"And this is what has parted us for two years. Miss Fitzpatrick—but it is all clear now. You are satisfied—you are mine again—say so."

"You are a tyrant, Claude."

"But say it."

"I do say it—there, some one is coming. I must go."

Margaret flew up stairs. The ladies, satisfied that the storm was over, now came

out, pale with fear and watching. Harriet's keen eye espied Mr. Haveloc leaning against the door of the conservatory.

"Marius among the ruins of Carthage," said she with a laugh.

"Marius! Mrs. Gage, can you say nothing better for me than that? Will you come to-morrow and fish with us?"

"Well; that is not a bad idea. I can throw a fly in a way that will make you jealous. Can you lend me a fishing-rod"

"Twenty."

"And you don't mean to set out at an uncouth hour to-morrow?"

"Not at all—two or three o'clock."

"But I shall be jealous," said Lucy. "Do you not ask me to come too?"

"By all means; bring all the ladies who like angling. Lady James, will you answer for Miss Campbell?"

"I shall bring Margaret, I know;" said Harriet quickly.

"Do—if Miss Capel will come;" said he with a peculiar smile.

"I shall ask no questions;" said Harriet coolly. "I shall pack her up in a band-box, and take her; though she cannot angle like some people!"

"No; she cannot angle," said Mr. Haveloc; laughing at the angry expression in Harriet's face.

"Ah! you think yourselves too deep for me;" said Harriet turning and walking upstairs; "but I would have you look sharp; for I know the symptoms."

CHAPTER XIV.

And though our joy is all too new to wear
The golden sweetness of assured repose,
Since the good Gods have steered our bark of life
Through the rough storm and the deceitful calm,
We may together stem the tranquil wave
Not fearful, not secure—but grateful ever;
While in the roseate light of new born hope
We steep the shadows of the coming time—
Most blest, that whatsoe'er our future lot
Love gilds the present, sanctifies the past.

ANON.

"I SAY, little one," exclaimed Harriet, as Margaret entered the Oratory to breakfast the next morning, "Will you go fishing with us to day, to Tynebrook?"

"With you—to Tynebrook, Harriet?" said Margaret quite surprised.

"Yes; did you never hear of such a place? Perhaps, you don't know that I saw

Mr. Haveloc last night, and made a fishing party for the ladies ?"

" Last night, Harriet !" said Margaret colouring.

" Yes, child," returned Harriet. " I suppose you think nobody can have interviews with a gentleman but yourself. "

Never was a more random shot, but it had the effect of covering Margaret's face with blushes.

" How you love to torment Miss Capel ;" said Mr. Gage, who was in the room. " I wonder she ever comes near you."

" I never saw anything like your cheeks, child," continued Harriet,

' They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.'

" Do have a little mercy, Harriet," said poor Margaret. " I cannot tell what you mean."

" I mean nothing more or less than this. You are to come with me to Tynebrook this morning, to learn how to angle ; who knows what you may catch ? I told Mr. Haveloc I should bring you, and he could

not prevent me, though he seemed very much averse to your company."

Margaret smiled quietly at this remark, and Harriet turned to attack Everard, who entered the room at this moment.

"So here you are, slug, who gave you leave to come and breakfast here this morning?"

"It is so dull, alone," said Everard, drawing his chair to the table.

"Where is your book, Sir? Have you learned that scene through? I have a great mind to hear you say it before I give you any coffee."

"I can't, Harriet," said Everard, quietly beginning his breakfast.

"Can't—what? Good gracious, that I should live to hear anybody say they can't!"

"I can't learn it; nor could you, if—' (here he stopped and took breath,) "if you did not know the English of it."

"If that is not a sufficient reason," said Mr. Gage, laughing, "I never heard one."

Everard went on peaceably eating his breakfast.

Harriet surveyed him in speechless indignation.

"He does not know the English of it!" she exclaimed at last; "he reads it like a parrot. Why even Captain Smithson—your prétendu, Margaret—knows French. It is something horrible. George, what shall we do?"

"Oh! Haveloc *must* take it now," said Mr. Gage, "he cannot have any real objection when he sees you in actual want of his assistance."

"Will you try to persuade him, Margaret?" said Harriet.

Margaret shook her head.

"It is a mere idle excuse," exclaimed Harriet after a pause, "I am sure, by the way he read that long scene with Camille, that he understood it."

"I know the meaning of part, but I cannot make it all out," said Everard.

"Then I will translate it for you. You

give me an infinite deal of trouble, but I console myself by thinking how remarkably well you will look."

Everard, soothed by this little compliment, offered no opposition to the plan; and Harriet, rising from the table, said that if Margaret had breakfasted, they would go down stairs and arrange their expedition.

A similar desire seemed to possess the whole party of ladies—to learn to angle. Never did a more brilliant morning follow a stormy night. Mrs. Fitzpatrick said something about damp grass, but she was the only middle-aged lady present, and her hint fell to the ground.

Lady James and Miss Campbell, standing together, by the open piano, were engaged in an interesting conversation; Miss Campbell sometimes running over the the keys with one hand, and looking down at the music book; Lady James approaching her head nearer and nearer in the earnestness of her discourse.

Harriet reclined in the corner of a couch, fixed her eyes, brimming with mischief, upon the talkers; and, although Lady James had the precaution to speak low, she caught a few fragments.

"He was absolutely rivetted by that song of Schubert's" said Lady James.

"It is one of my best," said Miss Campbell.

"The lilac bonnet to-day, my love, with the white china-asters."

"Yes, I intended—"

"You will be delighted with Tynebrook; it is the finest seat in this part of the country."

"Larger than Wardenscourt?" whispered Miss Campbell.

"Decidedly, and altogether a different style of place. A magnificent park; oaks that the Druids might have planted, and the house built in the quadrangular form like a Spanish convent"

"I like that sort of thing; but I fear he is rather difficult to—"

("To make a fool of," Harriet was almost tempted to add.)

"Not at all, my dear," pursued Lady James, "it is all manner; did I never tell you how he was drawn in by our good friend, Mrs. Maxwell Dorset?"

"No; I should like to hear it, of all things!"

"I'll tell you another time. Recollect, music is his passion. Talk of Spohr and Beethoven."

"I do so dislike a 'fanatico per la musica,'" said Miss Campbell.

"Yes, but a man of his standing in society," argued Lady James, "by the bye, I must secure him to drive with us to Tynebrook, this morning. You and him together; I will sit in front with Lord James."

Harriet sprang from the sofa, seized upon Margaret, who was quietly reading, and whirled her into the verandah. Lord Raymond, Mr. Gage and Mr. Haveloc were standing on the lawn. Mr. Gage smoking.

"Come here, some of you!" cried Harriet.

Mr. Haveloc instantly turned round, and rushed up the steps.

"At last!" he said, "I have been into the drawing-room half a dozen times, to see if you were not down."

"I have been there for ten minutes, I should think," said Harriet. "But I am afraid that pretty speech was not meant for me—perhaps, you took me for Mrs. Fitzpatrick?"

It did look as if he meant the speech for Margaret, since he took her hand and kept it.

"How did you sleep?" he asked Margaret.

"Very well, thank you, after all my fright," returned Harriet, "but it was a terrible storm, was it not Mr. Haveloc?"

"Ay—there was a storm last night," he said, as if just recollecting it.

"Did not you hear something of it then

—you ought, I am sure; for I found you all among the broken glass."

"Will you give me a lift, Mrs. Gage, this morning," he asked.

"With all my heart," said Harriet, "I take Margaret and Mrs. Fitzpatrick; there is just room for you, if Margaret has no objection."

"Not any, Harriet," said Margaret quietly.

"George!" cried Harriet, "I am going to run off with Mr. Haveloc."

"Pray do," replied Mr. Gage.

"You will never see me again, after this morning!" she exclaimed.

Mr. Gage laughed and lit another cigar.

"There is a sort of stupid tranquillity about those Gages," said Harriet, "I had hoped that George was an irascible person; but he grows more and more like his father."

"That is a high compliment, Harriet;" said Margaret.

"At —— there was always a good deal

of philandering between you and Uncle Gage," said Harriet; "you are an arrant little flirt in a quiet way."

"It must be a very quiet way, then;" said Mr. Haveloc, smiling.

"Don't you take her part!" cried Harriet, "you are on my side. George, I wish you would give me a cigar."

"Not I, indeed," said Mr. Gage.

"Then I will get one from Lord James;" said Harriet, coolly.

Mr. Gage came up to the verandah, and offered her his cigar case. Harriet took one.

"What are you going to do with it, Harriet?" asked Margaret.

"Nothing child—I have never smoked since the day I made you ill—but I don't choose him to refuse me anything. There, you stingy wretch, you may have it back again. Mr. Haveloc, tell me in confidence, what is your favourite colour for a bonnet?"

Mr. Haveloc laughed, and said that he had not made up his mind, but that when

he saw Mrs. Gage's, he should be able to decide the point.

Lady James was not pleased when she saw Mr. Haveloc step into Mrs. Gage's carriage; but she contented herself by bringing up the old story of Mrs. Maxwell Dorset, and declaring that it was now the same thing over again, with Mrs. Gage; a very designing young woman with all her apparent frankness. Miss Campbell cordially agreed in this flattering verdict.

But if Harriet had heard this remark, she would only have laughed at it, with Margaret and Mr. Haveloc seated opposite to her, as her carriage swept through the park gates, and drove into the stately avenues of Tynebrook. They entered the quadrangle through a grey archway, covered with ivy, and alighted at a stone entrance, divided by an oaken screen from the great hall.

"I say, little one, should not you like to have it?" asked Harriet, glancing round the splendid hall, "if you are very good, I'll see if I can help you."

Harriet equipped herself like a true angler, with a basket over her shoulder. Mr. Haveloc was buckling on her accoutrements for her, when the rest of the party crowded into the hall.

Lady James, though disturbed, did not allow herself defeated.

"Go to him, my love, and ask him to teach you to throw a fly," said she.

Miss Campbell took her advice, and succeeded, at least, in securing Mr. Haveloc's services. Having ascertained that Margaret was not going to fish, he selected a rod and a basket for Miss Campbell, put a fly on her line, and wished her success.

But Miss Campbell said she was such a novice, that Mr. Haveloc must kindly give her a little advice; and, at least, select for her a very fortunate spot.

So they all set off to the stream that ran through the park; a rough, brawling rivulet, that tumbled and foamed among rocky stones and straggling roots of trees.

Mr. Haveloc carried Miss Campbell's

rod and basket; and having found a spot where there were no hawthorns near to intercept her line, he recommended her to begin forthwith.

She made a trial; but any one who has taken a fishing-rod in their hand for the first time, knows that it is by no means an easy task to guide it.

After several desperate manœuvres, in which she perilled herself and her neighbours, more than once, with the spike at the end, she gave up the attempt, and trusted to the sole attraction of her lilac bonnet.

Harriet was far up the stream with Mr. Gage; and Everard, who was wandering about with his play-book in his hand, finding Miss Campbell disengaged, insisted on her hearing him; and she had the delightful task of listening to his blunders, while she was calculating whether, if Mr. Haveloc proved obstinate, it would be possible for her to accept a younger son.

Mr. Haveloc had managed to detach Margaret from the rest of the party, and

they sat watching the stream, as it glided through the tangled roots of the hawthorns.

They had time to say, not all they wished; but all there was any occasion for, before they were interrupted; for Mr. Haveloc well knew the precise angle of the rocky bank at which they would be invisible to the party below.

Harriet, coming down with her basket on her shoulder, and her rod unjointed, was the first to discover them. She suspended her song; stood before them a minute, enjoying Margaret's rosy blushes, and Mr. Haveloc's look of extreme unconcern; and then shrugging her shoulders, and throwing down her basket on the grass, exclaimed :—

"Well! never say I did not have a hand in it."

The ladies had settled to go home after a late luncheon. The gentlemen adhered to their original plan.

Everybody thought Mr. Haveloc was rather particular in his attentions to Mar-

garet; fortunately, for her comfort, they did not know how particular. They did not know that he had obtained her permission to write to Mr. Warde and to Mr. Casement, by that day's post. They did not know that when he went up to dress, the letters were written; and that Margaret's last words as he put her in the carriage, were to beg "that he would be very polite to poor Mr. Casement."

Harriet happened to be alone with Margaret, as Mrs. Fitzpatrick went back with Lady Raymond; and she caressed and teazed her alternately all the way home, but Margaret could now bear teazing very bravely.

This was destined to be a day of events, for when they returned to Wardenscourt, they found Captain Gage and Elizabeth already arrived. Lucy and Harriet, both warmly attached to Lady d'Eyncourt, flew to welcome her.

"And Margaret," said Elizabeth enquiringly, when she had embraced her cousins.

Margaret was in her arms at once, sobbing with joy and emotion. Elizabeth stroked down her hair, and spoke soothingly to her: she had grown older so fast, that Margaret was really a child to her now.

Captain Gage was in excellent spirits. He was come back to England, which delighted him, for he had no great taste for foreign parts. And now that the grief of Sir Philip's death was, with him, over, he felt that he had his daughter back again, all to himself, and that was a great source of consolation. He was sorry it happened that his sons were out fishing, but it was a capital day for sport, and he should see them in the morning, which after all, was almost the same thing. So he kissed Harriet again, and asked her whether she could give George a good character.

Elizabeth was beautiful in her weeds; she looked graver, older, and more serene. There was something in her slow and dignified movements, that reminded Margaret of Sir Philip. And though she

suffered, as Schiller tells us as all great minds suffer, in silence and alone, yet those who knew her best, felt a certainty, (in her case fully confirmed by time), that she would never marry again. She seemed to feel, as the old poets tell us, women felt in their days, that her destiny was accomplished, her part in the drama of life played out, that she had given her heart to her husband; and that to all eternity her soul was wedded to the soul that had preceded hers to Heaven.

With these peculiar views, a second marriage would have been to her a crime replete with horror and disgrace.

That many people regretted these views, and that some sought to change them, will not be wondered at, considering that, independant of her beauty and good private fortune, Sir Philip left her mistress and sole heiress of Sherleigh, expressing only a wish that if she should not marry again, it might go to some one of Captain Gage's descendants.

Every one, whom it nearly concerned,

was pleased with Margaret's approaching marriage. Mrs. Fitzpatrick declared it was all that she could wish. Lady d'Eyncourt congratulated her warmly. Her guardians gave a willing assent, Mr. Casement saying, that if Miss Peggy liked to venture upon the young man, it was her affair; that there was no mistake about his property, but that he thought him a violent fellow.

Elizabeth desired that Margaret should be married from Chirke Weston. Hubert was safe on the coast of South America, and there was no drawback to the plan. Captain Gage insisted upon giving her away. He said he had half a right to do so, since he had a narrow escape of being her father in earnest. For he still regarded Hubert's attachment to her as a childish piece of business, that would serve very well for a jest when one was wanting. So after the performance of the Vaudeville, which went off to admiration, the party at Wardenscourt broke up. The Gages and Raymonds, with Margaret and Mrs. Fitzpatrick started

for Chirke Weston; and Mr. Haveloc was kindly invited to take up his abode with Mr. Warde, who was to perform the ceremony.

Margaret found many changes since she left that neighbourhood, though none so strange to her as the change in her own prospects. At the Vicarage, Mrs. Somerton still resided, but her eldest daughter was now with her; a sharp, fractious spinster, who seemed but a bad exchange for her wilful, pretty sister, now fortunately Mrs. Compton.

Mrs. Compton had a little girl, and was grown, her mother said, more steady; and Mr. Compton had just been in all the newspapers for playing at skittles before a church door, during divine service, at some place where he was quartered with a detachment. This last piece of information came from the acid sister; but Mrs. Somerton added that it was done for a bet, which in her opinion, at once explained and excused the action.

The Trevors had for some time been in possession of Ashdale. They were very nice people, and already extremely popular with the neighbours. They were particularly civil to Margaret, took care to call upon her and to invite her, and to express a great deal of pleasure in her intended marriage. They little knew that they owed to Margaret's forbearance the estate they were now enjoying; for a word from her would have caused Mr. Grey to alter again, before his death, the distribution of his property; and they rather grudged her the ten thousand pounds which her uncle did bequeath to her—for very nice people are sometimes niggardly in their ideas. They thought her own ten thousand pounds ample for a single woman, and now that she was about to make a grand marriage, it was still less needful to her; but as no means occurred to them of getting this money back again, they contented themselves with *feeling* the injury, and with fixing on little Richard, as the one of their

children who would be sure to have had it, if Margaret had not robbed him of it.

But these were little private family feelings, which these nice people took care to keep to themselves. They were invited to the breakfast, very reluctantly, on the part of Harriet; who superintended everything, and who hated them because they happened to have five very plain children.

"Don't tell me, Uncle Gage, that it is not their fault!" she exclaimed, when Captain Gage ventured to remonstrate with her for her dislike. "Good people, always have handsome children. Your children were all handsome!"

Captain Gage was silenced by this logical inference, "his children were good looking, he must confess."

"Little sinners!" cried Harriet, "I'll have them all five to the breakfast, that I may make them ill for a fortnight. I know they are greedy by the look of them. I know they will eat as long as I choose to stuff them."

And little Mrs. Trevor, when she yielded to Harriet's earnest entreaties, that the five darlings should see the wedding and appear at the breakfast, little thought of the fate in store for them.

Harriet was now in the very midst of business, to the great contentment of her unquiet spirit. She assumed the direction of every thing; as Elizabeth was not in spirits to take an active share in such matters. But Harriet was in her element, inviting the company and arranging the breakfast, and holding secret committees, with Captain Gage.

And then the trousseau. She was a Queen among milliners and ladies' maids; and samples of gowns and bonnets. Her taste was admirable and most imperative; she would not allow an opinion but her own on the subject. Not a silk could be decided upon, unless she approved the colour; not a bonnet, unless she pronounced the shape to be faultless. Margaret submitted passively to all her directions, and

bade Mrs. Mason to be equally submissive. This was difficult, because then Mrs. Thompson began to triumph over Mrs. Mason, and to intrude her advice upon matters with which, as Mrs. Mason said, she had nothing to do.

Then Harriet selected the bridesmaids, which was a matter of some nicety. She meant to have had six; but as she insisted upon their all being handsome, she soon found herself obliged to limit the number to four.

Whenever Mr. Gage was within hearing, she took care to regret over and over again that the untoward circumstance of her own marriage prevented her from offering herself in that capacity.

"You see," said Mr. Gage to Margaret, on occasion of one of these attacks, "what you are to expect; when you have been married six months, you will wish yourself single, that you may be bridesmaid to some of your friends."

"No, she will not!" cried Harriet, "you

don't see the difference. Do you think, if I had married dear Mr. Haveloc, I should now wish I was single?"

Mr. Gage laughed, and said "that altered the case, he had no doubt."

But people with a very little imagination conjecture the degree of peace that would might have been enjoyed by both parties, if Harriet had married 'dear Mr. Haveloc.'

However, though she was not married to him, she enjoyed the great satisfaction of teazing him to her heart's content. She would come in with a solemn face, and assure him that his lawyer had died suddenly, and the settlements must be transferred into other hands; that his coachmaker had absconded, and he must send elsewhere for his carriage; or that Margaret was upstairs ill with the influenza, and the doctor was sure it would prove a very tedious attack.

This was the last time she succeeded in mystifying him, for before she had finished speaking, he rushed past her, and up the

stairs in search of Margaret, whom he met quietly coming down, in perfect health. Harriet declared that a very affecting meeting took place on the staircase, and made Captain Gage laugh very much with her account of it; but she could not get Mr. Haveloc to believe any more of her provoking tales.

But she could not let him entirely alone. She affirmed that with regard to ladies' dress, he had one single idea, an *idée fixe*, which she was anxious to reason him out of.

This idea was a perfect mania for shawls. He presented Margaret with one costly shawl after another, till Harriet said, it was plain he thought ladies' dress consisted of nothing else; and she vowed, that Margaret should go to church on *the* day, clothed in every single shawl he had ever given her. And then she would draw such a lively picture of Margaret's appearance in this singular costume, as would set every one present laughing.

Then she was always alluding to Mr.

Humphries, though this was partly to plague Margaret. She would mention the songs Mr. Humphries liked, and she would sing them of an evening with a great deal of pathos, directing the expression particularly to Margaret. If she happened to wear any thing particularly pretty, she would ask if it was not something of that sort that Mr. Humphries used to admire so much?

Mr. Haveloc was not of a more curious disposition than men in general, but it was natural he should wish to know why Harriet laid so much stress on this Mr. Humphries, and why Margaret should always colour when she did so.

Mr. Gage, who was present one evening when Harriet made one of these allusions, told him that Humphries was a country squire, who lived near Mr. Singleton; a good sort of man, whom he believed Miss Capel had refused when she was at Singleton Manor; that the poor fellow had a large property, but really was such a boor,

that you could not be surprised at any woman refusing him.

Fortunately Harriet did not overhear this explanation, or she would have little thanked Mr. Gage for interfering with her concerns.

Mr. Casement was a good deal at Chirke Weston. He came sometimes on business with Mr. Haveloc, but much more often because he had no where else to bestow himself.

He took an amazing fancy to Mrs. Gage, and, to Margaret's surprise, she seemed equally pleased with his society. He made Margaret very angry by saying the first morning he called, "I say, little woman, what a famous match Bessy Gage will be for me now. I little thought she would have such an estate as Sherleigh, when I first engaged her for my second."

But when he repeated this jest to Elizabeth, she did not seem at all ruffled; she merely hoped that she should never have

any more serious pretenders to her estate than Mr. Casement.

But the old man certainly admired Harriet the most. If she was not in the way when he called, he always asked where that handsome woman, Mrs. Gage, was ? And if she was in the garden, he would stand at the window watching her movements, and pointing out to Margaret how well she walked.

For Harriet, who darted about like lightening when she was in a hurry, walked with all the slow and undulating grace of a Spanish woman. Harriet used to question Mr. Casement very minutely respecting Margaret's early acquaintance with Mr. Haveloc.

"I advised the match, in the first instance," said Mr. Casement, "I told old Grey, (you did not know Grey, a worthy old soul, he left me a thousand pounds) I told Grey, that if he made up a match between his ward and Miss Peggy, he would be rid of the trouble of her."

"Then he made the match?" inquired Harriet.

"Not he! Grey was a child in such affairs. Miss Peggy was shy; Master Claude was sulky, and nothing came of it for a long time."

"And how did they understand each other?" asked Harriet.

"Why that, to tell you the truth, I don't know. I believe he hung so long about the house, that Master Grey asked him his intentions. And then, you know, the young man was obliged to speak out."

"But then, Mr. Casement, what put it off so long?"

"Ah! that I can't tell exactly; but I suppose it was Master Claude's temper. He is a dreadful temper. Besides, he went off with a married woman in Italy."

"But that was before this affair," said Harriet.

"Was it? I don't know. I am rather sorry for Miss Peggy; she is a well-behaved little girl, upon the whole; but as people

brew, so they must bake. Some people say that old Grey turned him out of the house, and would not hear of the match. I know this, that I caught him one evening making love; and the next day he was off. But old Grey was very close, in some things: he had his secrets. He rather wished her to marry Hubert Gage."

There was one thing in which Mr. Casement and Harriet cordially sympathised. He hated the Trevors.

"Nice people, ah! very nice, indeed," he exclaimed. "Everybody speaks well of them; 'so much the worse,' as the man says, in the 'School for Scandal.' A mean family, depend on it. A very attached couple; attached, because they have one interest in common; to scrape and save every farthing they can lay their hands upon. And the children; straggling all over Ashdale, and spoiling the furniture. Poor old Grey never liked children. 'I like 'em when they grow old enough to talk to,' he used to say. I will tell you when I like 'em — never! I should like to see

Trevor begging about the streets, like a Manchester weaver, with his five children behind him."

When Harriet confided to Mr. Casement how she meant to serve the five children at the breakfast, his delight knew no bounds.

"Have 'em! cram 'em! the avaricious little villains!" he exclaimed. "Have them all, down to the stuffed pillow-case on two legs, that they call baby! See, if I don't do 'em a good turn. I'll drown 'em in sack! I'll make 'em all drunk, or my name is not Roger Casement!"

And Mr. Casement, when the time came was as good as his word.

. . . . .

Lady d'Eyncourt, Margaret and Harriet, were walking on the lawn beneath the broad light of the harvest moon. It was the evening before the marriage.

"Do feel nervous, little one, please," said Harriet; "I can't bear heroines. Do be frightened! I assure you, I tremble for you. He is a fire eater — your Mr. Haveloc."

"You will make her nervous, Harriet," said Elizabeth, gently.

"I tell you what, Margaret," said Harriet, "I hope you and Mr. Haveloc, will not turn too religious, that is all. I expect, when I come to Tynebrook, to find you grown into two old hermits, with beards down to your waists."

"Pray exempt me from the beard, Harriet," said Margaret smiling.

"I say, the next time you go to Tynebrook church, you will think of your first visit," said Harriet

"Do not remind me of it, Harriet."

"What a number of little lies you did tell," exclaimed Harriet; "but I suppose it is natural, is it not, Bessy? Do you remember whether I told many during my noviciate?"

"Oh! a great many, Harriet."

"I will call you out, child! Why, what in the world can Mr. Haveloc want with us? To go and sign the settlements? I am quite agreeable. I assure you, Margaret, I signed my own death-warrant in a

fine flowing hand, that will prove to future ages how valiant I was."

Margaret signed hers too steadily, Harriet thought. She crept near her at the last signature, and gave her arm such a push, as sent her pen across the parchment. Just to keep up appearances, Harriet told Mr. Haveloc, and to make people believe she felt some little regret at the very unguarded step she was about to take.

Elizabeth, being still in weeds, did not go to church with Margaret. Every one was delighted with the delicate and faultless beauty of the bride when she appeared, looking radiant in her white lace and orange blossoms. Even Harriet was contented with the numerous cortège that she had contrived to assemble in honour of the occasion.

Lady d'Eyncourt was the first to welcome Margaret and wish her joy, when Mr. Haveloc led her back into the drawing-room, calm—silent—with just a few tears upon her blushing cheek.

"But I dare not ask, that your lot

may be as happy as mine," she whispered, " lest it should be as brief."

" Ah, I could die now!" said Margaret, as she rested her head on Elizabeth's shoulder—feeling as Othello did; and as all those who feel deeply, must sometimes feel, in this unstable world.

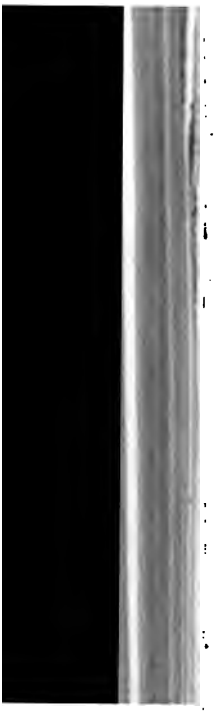
Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Lady d'Eyncourt, stood together at the window watching the carriage which bore away Mr. and Mrs. Haveloc.

" I have not a fear for her," said Elizabeth, turning to her companion, " hers was a love match, and I have no faith in any other."

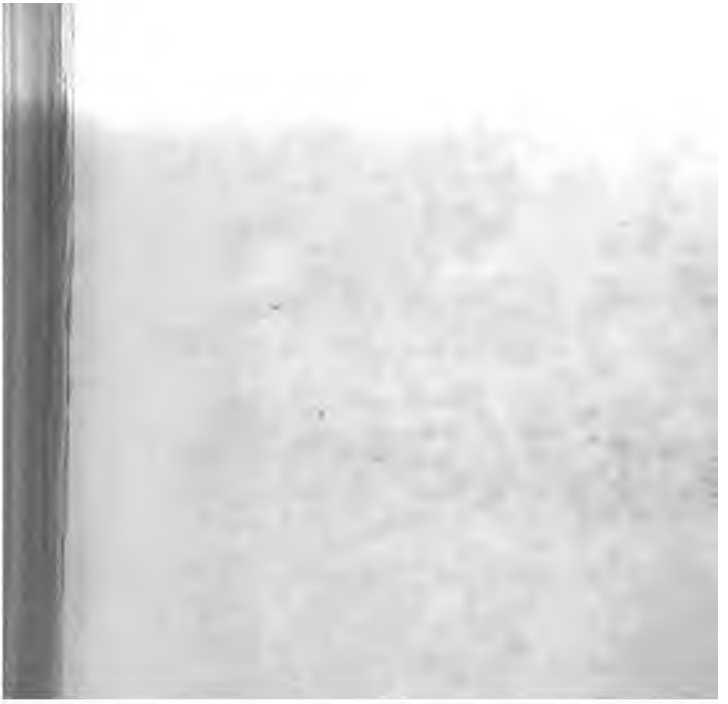
" Nor I," returned Mrs. Fitzpatrick with a smile.

" For Love is Lord of Truth and Loyalty,
Lifting himself out of the lowly dust,
On golden plumes up to the purest sky."

THE END.



LONDON
Printed by Schulze & Co., 13, Poland



Trevor begging about the streets, like a Manchester weaver, with his five children behind him."

When Harriet confided to Mr. Casement how she meant to serve the five children at the breakfast, his delight knew no bounds.

"Have 'em! cram 'em! the avaricious little villains!" he exclaimed. "Have them all, down to the stuffed pillow-case on two legs, that they call baby! See, if I don't do 'em a good turn. I'll drown 'em in sack! I'll make 'em all drunk, or my name is not Roger Casement!"

And Mr. Casement, when the time came was as good as his word.

. . . . .

Lady d'Eyncourt, Margaret and Harriet, were walking on the lawn beneath the broad light of the harvest moon. It was the evening before the marriage.

"Do feel nervous, little one, please," said Harriet; "I can't bear heroines. Do be frightened! I assure you, I tremble for you. He is a fire eater — your Mr. Haveloc."

"You will make her nervous, Harriet," said Elizabeth, gently.

"I tell you what, Margaret," said Harriet, "I hope you and Mr. Haveloc, will not turn too religious, that is all. I expect, when I come to Tynebrook, to find you grown into two old hermits, with beards down to your waists."

"Pray exempt me from the beard, Harriet," said Margaret smiling.

"I say, the next time you go to Tynebrook church, you will think of your first visit," said Harriet

"Do not remind me of it, Harriet."

"What a number of little lies you did tell," exclaimed Harriet; "but I suppose it is natural, is it not, Bessy? Do you remember whether I told many during my noviciate?"

"Oh! a great many, Harriet."

"I will call you out, child! Why, what in the world can Mr. Haveloc want with us? To go and sign the settlements? I am quite agreeable. I assure you, Margaret, I signed my own death-warrant in a

fine flowing hand, that will prove to future ages how valiant I was."

Margaret signed hers too steadily, Harriet thought. She crept near her at the last signature, and gave her arm such a push, as sent her pen across the parchment. Just to keep up appearances, Harriet told Mr. Haveloc, and to make people believe she felt some little regret at the very unguarded step she was about to take.

Elizabeth, being still in weeds, did not go to church with Margaret. Every one was delighted with the delicate and faultless beauty of the bride when she appeared, looking radiant in her white lace and orange blossoms. Even Harriet was contented with the numerous cortège that she had contrived to assemble in honour of the occasion.

Lady d'Eyncourt was the first to welcome Margaret and wish her joy, when Mr. Haveloc led her back into the drawing-room, calm—silent—with just a few tears upon her blushing cheek.

"But I dare not ask, that your lot

may be as happy as mine," she whispered, "lest it should be as brief."

"Ah, I could die now!" said Margaret, as she rested her head on Elizabeth's shoulder—feeling as Othello did; and as all those who feel deeply, must sometimes feel, in this unstable world.

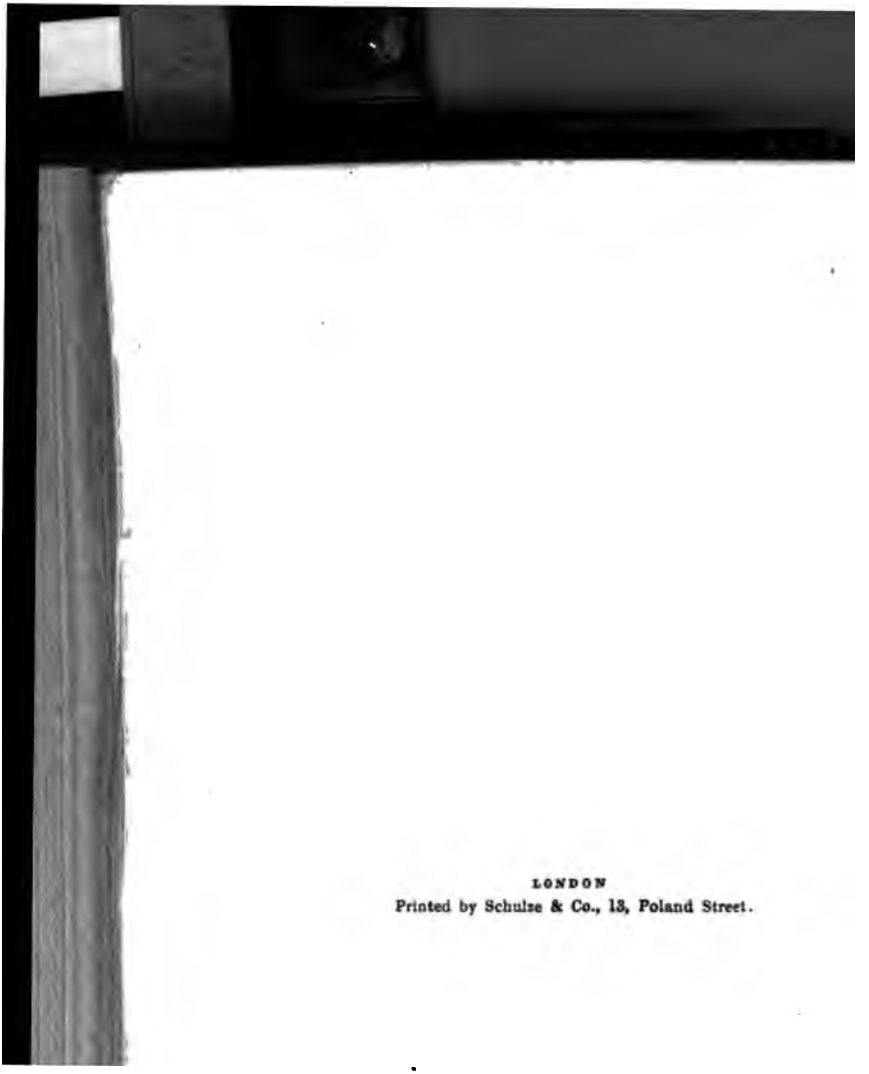
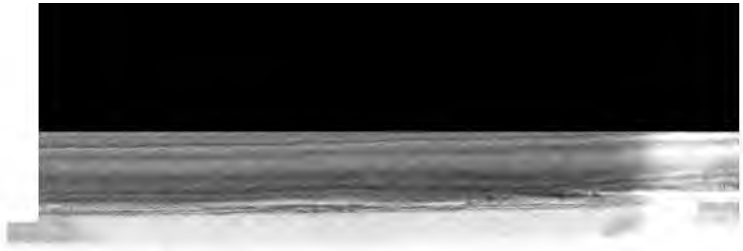
Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Lady d'Eyncourt, stood together at the window watching the carriage which bore away Mr. and Mrs. Haveloc.

"I have not a fear for her," said Elizabeth, turning to her companion, "hers was a love match, and I have no faith in any other."

"Nor I," returned Mrs. Fitzpatrick with a smile.

"For Love is Lord of Truth and Loyalty,
Lifting himself out of the lowly dust,
On golden plumes up to the purest sky."

THE END.



LONDON
Printed by Schulze & Co., 13, Poland Street.